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On the Irish Clachan Settlement Pattern and the Authority of Order and Form

Doctor of Philosophy

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On the Irish Clachan Settlement Pattern and the Authority of Order and Form

Abstract

The Irish clachan is a settlement form, a grouping of houses and related out-buildings, that has been associated with the 'Rundale' agricultural system. Study of it has proceeded largely within the discipline of Geography, and has been coordinated primarily by questions such as those of the antiquity and distribution of the type. The morphology of the built form has been commented on, but in a limited and highly circumscribed way; to date it has received little sustained attention. This is the focus of the present study - the spatial formation of the clusters, their 'architectural' quality, and specifically how that was and is interpreted and understood. Following an introductory critical review of recent academic treatment of the subject, a brief history is sketched of ways in which the clusters have been described. Close attention is paid to the categories which relate to their spatial qualities, categories which, it is recognized, passed over into the documents of the human sciences and which problematize the latter's project of understanding. It is thus argued, with reference to Heidegger's thinking, that scholarship on the clusters has conceptually mis-sited them. The hermeneutic position of the investigator has not been thematized. By situating the commentaries on native settlement within the development of the expansive, and far from uncommitted, discourse on Ireland the operation of the notion of disorder is examined. Here it is seen to be structurally related to a series of privileged and abject categories strategically organized around a master duality of civility and savagery. The suggestion that geometrically structured space, as the space of authority, was importantly linked with the privileged categories is investigated and the relationship between the clusters and the categories of the 'monstrous' and the 'grotesque' considered.

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Contents

	Page
<u>Introduction</u>	7
<u>Chapter 1.</u> The Case for the Archaic Lineage of the Clachan	11
a. <i>Introduction</i>	12
b. <i>The case</i>	13
c. <i>Supporting evidence</i>	18
d. <i>The critique</i>	29
e. <i>The 'Anglo-Norman clachans'</i>	35
f. <i>The problem of definition</i>	42
<u>Chapter 2.</u> Democracy Overgrown and Nature Affronted: the Perception of the Irish House Cluster	47
a. <i>Introduction - travel and Ireland</i>	48
b. <i>The Ireland visited</i>	52
c. <i>The descriptions</i>	59
d. <i>Scenography and planimetry</i>	67
<u>Chapter 3.</u> Interpreting Interpretation: Hermeneutics, Ideology and the Anaximander Fragment	70
a. <i>The status of knowledge in the human sciences: contingency, objectivism, and power</i>	71
b. <i>Heidegger, the Anaximander Fragment, and the hermeneutic motion</i>	77
c. <i>Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology</i>	81
d. <i>Discourse and the idea of order</i>	93
<u>Chapter 4.</u> Seeing the Irish World	98
a. <i>Introduction</i>	99
b. <i>Gerald of Wales</i>	104
c. <i>Tudor Ireland and beyond</i>	115
d. <i>Into the nineteenth century</i>	137

<u>Chapter 5.</u>	Geometry and Domination	140
a.	<i>Introduction and apology</i>	141
b.	<i>'Order'</i>	145
c.	<i>Rome</i>	153
d.	<i>The grotesque and the monstrous</i>	161
<u>Chapter 6.</u>	Conclusion and Introduction	168
<u>Bibliography.</u>		170
	Primary Sources:	
a.	<i>Historical Texts</i>	171
b.	<i>Methodology and theory</i>	175
	Secondary Sources:	
a.	<i>History</i>	177
b.	<i>Methodology and theory</i>	184
	Dictionaries	185

Illustrations

	Facing Page
a. Dr D. McCourt's mapping of "clachans", 1832-40	14
b. Arthur Young's sketch of an Irish cabin, 1776	34
c. The 'Antiquarian Sublime' - Frontspiece to Hoare's Tour in Ireland, 1807	50
d. "Into the hand of Futurity" - Frontspiece to The Compleat Irish Traveller, 1788	51
e. "Dugurth" and the Protestant Settlement, Achill, 1837	60
f. Keel, Achill, 1838 and 1843	61
g. "Menlow", Galway, 1839	62
h. Workhouse	66
i. Proposed lay-out of a Munster seignory, 1586	156
j. Model land division by Cressey Dymock (1), 1653	157
k. Model land division by Cressey Dymock (2), 1653	157
l. Edward Kelley's vision, as related to John Dee, 1584	158
m. The description of the vision	158
n. Ideal man	163
o. Ideal city	163
p. Irish man	163
q. Irish 'city'	163
r. Two forces	165

Introduction

This is first of all an architectural study. It sets out to examine the semantics and interpretation of a particular 'architectural' (or perhaps better, 'anti-architectural') configuration, the Irish 'clachan'. This is a settlement form of uncertain antiquity, a grouping of houses and out-buildings, that has been associated in modern geographical literature with the 'Rundale' system of agriculture (sometimes described as 'Irish open-field'). The intention here is to problematize the way the type has been understood to date, thereby releasing it as a proper subject for architectural thought; the guiding point is the possibility of the 'vernacular' to provide a radical, as opposed to a conservative, architectural cue. In any such study questions of language will inevitably be pre-eminent and it is recognized at the outset that little will be achieved through a simple tabulation of the descriptive terms put to work in representing the space figured by the clusters. The challenge is rather to interpret interpretation and this will mean going beyond the writing dealing specifically with the phenomenon to illustrate the positions that the descriptive categories take up within a more general constellation of concepts (or 'chain of signifiers'), while in turn relating these to their discursive, institutional, and cultural setting. It will be a question, in other words, of the meaning of meanings. Virtually all work on this subject has been carried out within the discipline of Geography and so far the morphology of the built form and its interpretation has received little attention. This is the first study to approach this subject and in which a thematic of the position of the investigator is developed.

The study begins with an attempt to review and engage with an aspect of the existing literature. It therefore stands somewhat apart from the argument developed thereafter. What is in question are the claims for the antiquity of the type, certainly, with the attendant theories of its ubiquity and the social position of its occupants, the most contentious point raised and very much the pivot around which debate has turned. I argue that while the original body of theory is in some respects seriously deficient, there have also been difficulties with the critical attacks on it. The rationale underpinning the most recent attempt to circumscribe the age cannot be upheld when brought into contact with comparative material. It would appear that, given available evidence, the definition of the type presents a problem to research which may mean that the question of the antiquity must remain indeterminate.

The second chapter examines the descriptive literature that exists on the clusters, and sets out the circumstances under which it emerged. Close attention is paid to the categories relating to their spatial qualities, and it is

recognized how these passed into, and were reproduced in, the documents of the human sciences. A tension, which, it is suggested, was rooted in the aesthetic theory of the 18th century, is detected between two modes of perception - the apolitical and 'flattened' apprehension of the distanced aesthete; and the politically urgent 'planimetric' apprehension arising from proximity.

Chapter Three is concerned to thematize the position of the investigator, who is necessarily located within traditions of thought. The problematics of science's claims to objectivity and transparency of representation are discussed, and the aggressive and culturally constructed nature of the 19th century categories are observed. Via consideration of Heidegger's translation of the Anaximander Fragment, it is argued that the way the clusters were thought mis-sited them, and that they were inevitably found wanting when interpreted within the context of spatial requirements which had a strong instrumental character. Thus their alterity was compromised and they were stifled under a deceptive familiarity which relegated them and which ran counter to the anthropological ideal of a transparent representation. The problem of agency and of the 'setting' of the interpreter is examined through the debate between Habermas and Gadamer. The former's account of ideology highlights the solidification of certain ('distorting') linguistic formations under conditions of domination. For Habermas interpretation and understanding is 'deformed' under conditions of repression, a situation whose remedy rests upon the diagnosis of the relationship between power and linguistic practice. For both Habermas and Gadamer reassessment and reinterpretation (escape from ideology / expansion of horizon) become available with the realization of the contingency and grounding of existing understandings. Thus to make the familiar strange and loosen the historically closed and ideologically frozen a discursive history is in order.

Suspicion is aroused regarding the descriptive categories when it is recognized that they mark thinking on 'Ireland' at all points. To produce an 'archaeology' of the categories, one looks to the massive descriptive enterprises which accompanied acquisitive endeavour in Ireland. An analysis of the Anglo-Norman and Elizabethan literature indicates a discourse, articulated in the service of domination, in operation around a series of dualities. Noting the interconnection of the 'abject' poles, the manner in which they are cognate with one another, we arrive at a *meaning* of the categories. While subject to notable shifts in destination related to political and aesthetic thought, this discourse is remarkably persistent and can be tracked into the 19th century where, despite the complexities of the historical situation, the semantic implications are maintained.

How then are we to diagnose, beyond this, the observers' reactions? What has secured spatially the order and form which the clusters so clearly lacked? What was the spatial correlate of these privileged categories? It is argued that ideas of geometry played a foundational role in what we might call the 'metaphysics of form'. For the influential intellectual basis of this we look to the Platonic tradition, with its powerful image of the transcendental geometer God who acts upon inchoate matter, bringing it into form. With geometry comes the 'projector' or 'author'; geometricized space is literally the space of authority - it is marked throughout, and continually refers to, the structuring intelligence, whether God or political power. As the 'truth of form', resonating with divine authority, geometric space gains the character of a corrective. The strong connection between the ideas of geometry, degree, and order are investigated. Bringing this into contact with the analysis in the previous chapter leads to the suggestion that the space of the clusters be understood as 'grotesque' or 'monstrous' in their affront to the rule of form and transgression of geometric stasis, order, and the closure of geometric figuration. Examining ideas surrounding the monstrous in the Western tradition, we find emphasis laid, in its occurrence, precisely on the erasure of the author.

Chapter 1: The Case for the Archaic Lineage of the Clachan.

a. Introduction

I am here concerned with the claim for the antiquity of the form, and particularly with the course of the debate that has revolved around that claim. I am less concerned with theories of its ubiquity and its place in social structure which seem to me to have, in the unfolding of the discussion, distorted thinking on the first issue. The aim is to review and comment on the discussion. No attempt is made to resolve an issue which may be, I argue, due to conceptual difficulties, unresolvable.

b. *The case*

However iconoclastic the text may subsequently reveal itself to be, it is clearly *de rigueur* for essays dealing with the phenomenon of clustered rural settlement in Ireland to be prefaced with an acknowledgement of Estyn Evans' early papers on the subject. And no matter what position the later writer takes with regard to Evans, the reading of his work retains its status as rite of initiation and return to origin. It would seem that the trace of what is present at beginnings can never thereafter be wholly eluded, and indeed it is a claim that Evans makes in his earliest essay on the subject, for the archaic lineage of the rundale system of agriculture and its associated clustered settlement pattern (and the implicit distributional and ethnic ramifications of that claim as it developed under further research), which echoes down as the key point of dispute among engaged historical geographers.¹ In this paper, a report on rundale communities which Evans witnessed in the 1930's in county Donegal, he associates the Irish openfield system (rundale) with clustered settlement² and suggests that the latter (not yet referred to as "clachans") co-existed with a dispersed pattern of raths from early Celtic times³; and that further "One is tempted to regard the openfield system as a survival from pre-Celtic times, when the climate of sub-boreal Ireland was more conducive to simple agriculture, overlaid with Celtic influences from the late Bronze Age onwards."⁴ This cue was taken up and developed under the research of a number of Evans' students who published a series of papers which, with varying degrees of contingency, put forward the case for the antiquity of the clachan form.

A summary of the argument begins with the settlements of the Neolithic farmer colonists who arrive in Ireland, in the wake of Mesolithic food gatherers, toward the end of the 4th millenium B.C.. Despite limited archaeological evidence it is taken that their characteristic mode of settlement is clustered and that such a form is largely maintained, surviving technological and cultural innovation, into the Bronze Age.⁵ The arrival of Celtic speakers around the 3rd century B.C.

¹ Evans, while generally seen as initiating 20th century research on the historical geography of Irish settlement, was at the same time concerned to overturn an assumption that the pattern of native settlement in Ireland had always been dispersed. His citation for this view is A. Damangeon. *La géographie de l'habitat rural*. Union géographique internationale: Report of the commission on types of rural settlement. p.59.

² Evans, 1939, p.27.

³ *ibid*, p.28.

⁴ *ibid*.

⁵ e.g. "Few settlements of this period have been discovered, but that at Lough Gur, co. Limerick, revealed a small farm community which must have been typical of the Irish neolithic. It consisted of at least twelve houses, forming a loose cluster of dwellings It is likely that farm clusters such as Lough Gur continued

brings the introduction of the isolated farmstead, obstinately signified in the Irish landscape by its surrounding ditch and enclosure of earth (the rath) or stone (the cashel). These, widely scattered over Ireland, are understood as being the characteristic form of habitation of the free classes in Celtic society during the first millenium A.D.; while most raths are taken to date from between the 5th and 10th centuries occupation may continue, particularly in areas where Gaelic society remained remote from English influence to the end of the Middle Ages.⁶ A mapping of rath distribution, however, illustrates a thinning-out of their concentration in certain areas, notably north and east Ulster and south and east Leinster, to an extent incommensurable with evidence or assumption regarding occupation of tracts of fertile land and population levels in these areas.⁷ The residual nature of the pattern and the possibilities of differential destruction by tillage notwithstanding, the proposition, then, as Proudfoot boldly puts it is "... that other forms of settlement co-existed with the raths and that these were undefended house clusters, proto-clachans if you like."⁸ These house clusters would be the settlements of the pre-Celtic population who retained occupation of their ancient lands, but who were forced into unfree status by the Celtic colonists.⁹ McCourt noted that his mapping of clachans based on the first edition 6" O.S. maps (1832-40) demonstrated a considerable density of clusters in areas of ancient settlement "...especially in Ulster, along the Shannon and the river valleys of the south east..." where there were few raths. While accepting the

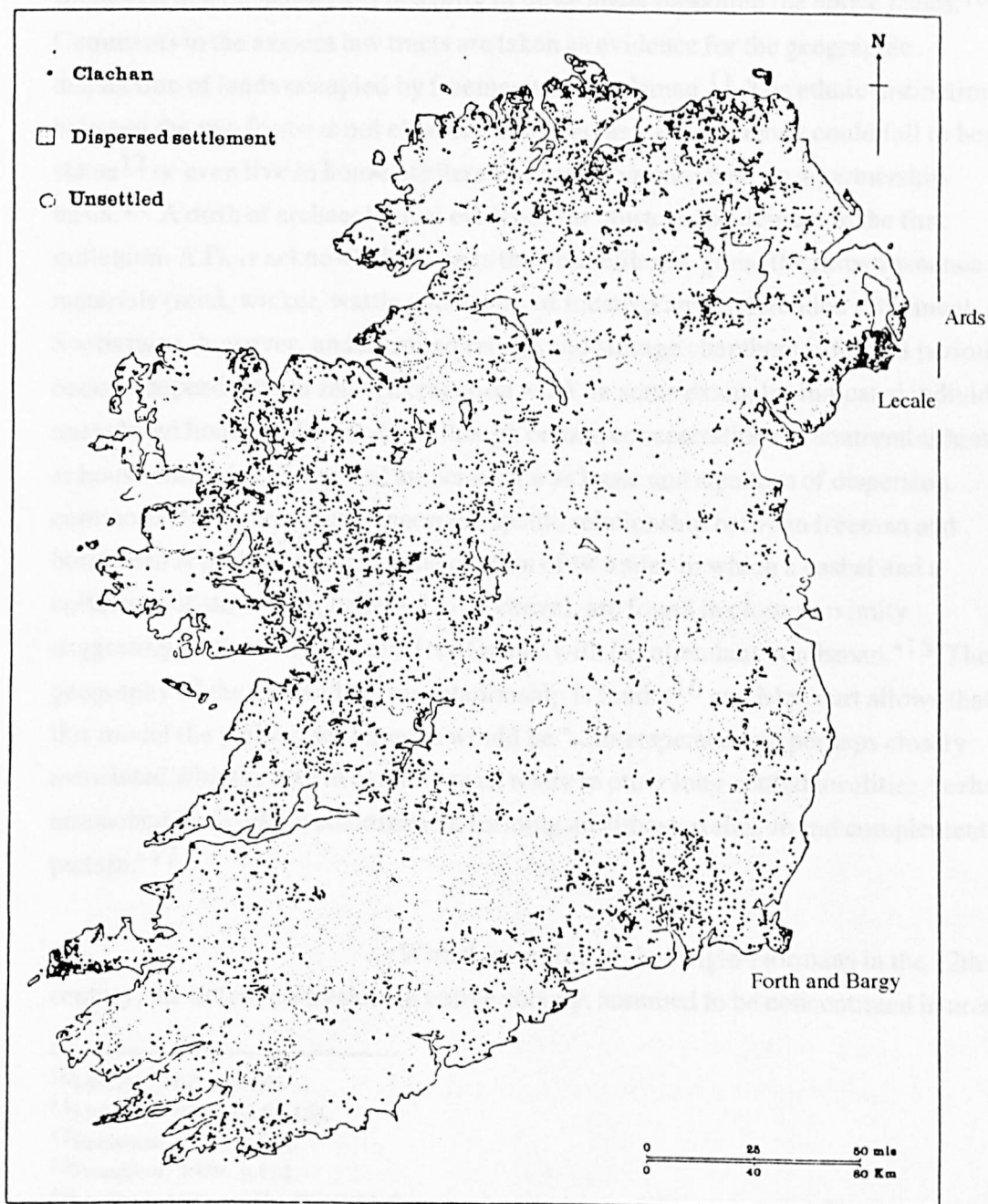
as the predominant form of settlement in bronze age times..." (Buchanan, 1970, p.147) and "...the tradition of clustered settlement which seems to have been the norm during prehistoric times" (ibid, p.149). Buchanan avoids drawing explicit connections across the periods with which he deals, but he detects similarities; whether they are familial or not remains, to a degree, in question. So the hypothesized Celtic bondsmen's dwellings "...almost certainly...were hut clusters such are recorded in the Neolithic at Lough Gur..." (1973, p.614), it is likely that the *baile* of the servile *betagh* on manorial land was a house cluster "...in the same settlement tradition as the bond settlements of the first millenium A.D." (1970, p.150) and that it was "...probably similar..." to a clachan (1973, p.610). With regard to agricultural practice he notes that "There can be little doubt that a common field system analogous to rundale was practised ..." during the first millenium A.D. Of the infield/outfield distinction pertaining to the rundale of modern times we are told that "...a tradition of continuous cropping may well date back to the Bronze Age" and that "As an extensive use of land, outfield cultivation represents a continuation of Neolithic shifting cultivation..." (1973, p.617).

⁶McCourt, 1971, p.151; Glasscock, p. 282. A map by Richard Barthelet shows the rath of O'Hagan of Tullaghoge in obstinately Gaelic Tyrone, its earth-work planted with trees, still inhabited in 1600 - Ó Danachair, p.96; Hayes-McCoy, Plate v. Raven's survey of the Essex estate in Monaghan (1634) shows a single instance of a cabin within a rath - Duffy, p. 250. This chronology is a much contested issue, with battle lines drawn up between archaeologists and geographers / historians. Lynn ("Medieval Ringfort", p.29, 32-4) argues a functional and chronological distinction between rath and cashel, and that the demise of the former had taken place before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. He feels ("Dating", p.45-7) that Barthelet's map shows Tullaghoge rath "...derelict with its banks overgrown with trees." But the house within looks far from derelict and it's surely strange that *only* its banks have become overgrown. Nicholls (1993, p.405) suggests that it may have been customary to plant the banks. Graham argues against Lynn (1980, p.36-9); McNeill equates the abandonment of the rath with a state of mind willing to, to some extent, welcome the Anglo-Norman expansion (1975, p.38).

⁷McCourt, 1971, p.151; Proudfoot, p.112.

⁸Proudfoot, 1959, p.112.

⁹McCourt, 1971, p.152-153; "Beneath the freemen in status was a servile class, descendents perhaps of the indigenous farmers of prehistoric times who became the bondsmen of the first iron age colonists" (Buchanan, 1970, p.148); and citing Mac Airt, Proudfoot, 1959, p.113; Buchanan, 1970, p.149 and 1973, p.615.



Dr. D. McCourt's mapping of 'clachans', 1832-40

difficulties inherent in a distributional mapping which deals with examples of twin phenomena which may be separated by a considerable chronological gap, he suggested that the numerical disparity in these areas supported the above thesis.¹⁰ Comments in the ancient law tracts are taken as evidence for the geographic disjunction of lands occupied by freeman and bondsman.¹¹ The ethnic distinction between the two forms is not clear cut however, as Celtic freeman could fall to bond status¹² or even live in house clusters and hold common land on a partnership basis.¹³ A dearth of archaeological evidence for clustered settlement in the first millenium A.D. is acknowledged, as is the unlikelihood, given the impermanence of materials (mud, wicker, wattle and daub), of locating any undefended settlement. Souterrains, however, underground refuge and storage chambers from this period, occur independently of raths; excavation work on some examples indicated individual unenclosed houses adjacent and although certain concentrations of souterrains hinted at house clustering the spatial association was loose and a pattern of dispersion common.¹⁴ The previously theorized spatial relationship between freeman and bondsman is problematized by the citation of two sites in which a cashel and a collection of stone huts, believed to be coeval, are found in close proximity suggesting "...the dwelling of a free farmer with his attendant bondsman."¹⁵ The geography of the free and unfree relationship is murky¹⁶ and McCourt allows that on this model the plebian settlements would be "...interspersed and perhaps closely associated with the rath in certain areas, while in other long-settled localities, perhaps untouched by Goidelic colonization, forming an almost exclusive and complementary pattern."¹⁷

With the coming of the Anglo-Normans in the 12th century, the unfree cultivators in native society, assumed to be concentrated in areas

¹⁰McCourt, 1971, p.156.

¹¹McCourt, 1971, p.152-153.

¹²Buchanan, 1973, p.614.

¹³Proudfoot, 1959, p.112.

¹⁴McCourt, 1971, p.152. While McCourt emphasizes the possibility of clustering (his example is in South Antrim) and links the souterrains the Proudfoot's "proto-clachans" and hence into the "Celtic bondsman" theory, Buchanan (1970, p.148) associates them with the possibility of undefended individual farmsteads of Celtic origin, of the sort which presumably occurred between the arrival of the Celtic peoples in Ireland and the era of vigorous rath construction from the 5th century on and perhaps persisted into the latter period; (Proudfoot notes evidence supporting the case for the development of the rath from unenclosed or flimsily enclosed farmsteads (1970)). It should be noted that if there was such persistence the distribution of raths can no longer be taken as an index of Celtic settlement, and a fertile area which exhibits few raths may have as easily been characterized by a dispersed pattern of settlement as a clustered one.

¹⁵Buchanan, 1970, p.149; see also Buchanan, 1973, p.614 and McCourt, 1971, p.153.

¹⁶Buchanan notes that servile tenants worked some of the lands held by freemen; 1973, p.614.

¹⁷McCourt, 1971, p.157. The term *Goidelic* refers to that branch of the Celtic peoples represented by the Irish and Gaelic Scots, the speakers of Gaelic or Q-Celtic, as distinct from the Brythonic branch, speakers of P-Celtic, manifested in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

long associated with tillage and hence attractive to the invaders as an index of fertile land and source of labour, continued in servitude under the new lords.¹⁸ It is argued that they continued as the servile *betaghs* mentioned in documents relating to some manors who, seemingly equivalent to the English *villein*, were *adscripti glebae*, required to labour on demesne land, and to pay rent for the land they held.¹⁹ The land held by the *betaghs* was normally segregated from the rest of manorial land and often organized in specific townlands which sometimes bore the name of the inhabiting kin-group; in rundale-fashion they held a joint tenancy and may have followed infield cultivation.²⁰ Buchanan writes that they "...contributed diversity to the settlement pattern, for they lived in separate nucleated settlements, probably similar to clachans and designated *baile* in the documents - a word later anglicized as 'bally' and a common element in place-names."²¹ And McCourt suggests that, in manorial areas, "...it may have been these settlements that survived into the nineteenth century as clachans."²² Outwith the areas of Norman control, native practices are taken to have continued, in largely the same form as the previous millenium²³, characterized by the distinguishing duality of the free living in raths or isolated farmsteads and farming in compact holdings, and the bonded probably living in clusters and farming in common fields.

A shortage of documentary material troubles the trail of the clachan from the 14th century Gaelic revival into the era of re-colonization, plantation, and land confiscation.²⁴ But the social and economic revolutions wrought in the 17th and 18th centuries (plantation, the evacuation of land and its enclosure for the construction of large grazing tracts, and the consolidation of arable lands and reform of agricultural practice stimulated by an increasingly buoyant grain market)²⁵ are taken as erasing clachans from much of the landscape and causing their withdrawal into refuge areas of native practices on marginal lands and on pockets of better estate land where native tenancy coincided with a disinterested landowner.²⁶

¹⁸McCourt, 1971, p.143,153; Proudfoot, 1959, p.115; Buchanan, 1973, p.609.

¹⁹Their position, however, is seen to have gradually improved through the 14th century with the contraction of population after the Black Death, a certain blurring of the ethnic distinction, and the increasing precariousness of Anglo-Norman control. By the mid-14th century some were holding large compact farms; Buchanan, 1973, p.611.

²⁰Buchanan, 1970, p.150 and 1973, p.609-610.

²¹Buchanan, 1973, p.610.

²²McCourt, 1971, p.143.

²³"There is no direct evidence about the organization of native farming in medieval times, but it is unlikely to differ greatly from that of the previous millenium" (Buchanan, 1973, p.612).

²⁴Proudfoot, 1959, p.115; Glasscock noted that "Scholars working on settlement survivals and seeking the origins of modern forms have in most cases come up against a blank wall for the period before 1600..." (p.280).

²⁵Buchanan, 1970, p.152-153; McCourt, 1971, p.137, 140.

²⁶e.g. as McCourt shows on the Brownlow lands south west of Lough Neagh (1971, p.132-133).

There is, however, some evidence of the descendents of 17th century planters building in what appears to be clachan-form in the 18th and 19th centuries.²⁷ Especially it is in the rocky and infertile western areas, particularly in Connacht which received many of the native dispossessed, that it is suggested an older pattern of settlement was maintained.²⁸ And in the west, McCourt argues that great numbers of the native freehold class became accommodated in clachans as their status was forced down and their primary mode of subsistence changed from cattle to cultivation.²⁹ The hyperbolic increase in population from the late 17th century to the mid-19th century found most graphic expression in the extreme proliferation (into previously unsettled and increasingly marginal land) and expansion (with individual compact farms mutating through partible inheritance in the course of several generations³⁰) of clusters over areas of unreformed estate land and generally over the increasingly congested infertile western districts. It was this pattern that was mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the years before the mid-19th century Famine.³¹

Notwithstanding his insistence on what he termed the "dynamic quality of Irish rural settlement" it is McCourt who gives us the most clear-cut claim, positing at least a locational and typological stasis: "...the servile cultivators of the laws (*bothaig* or *scullogues*) living in their clustered kin-groups have remained a constant element through centuries of change and conquest irrespective of changing overlordships. Descendents mostly of Neolithic farmers who were absorbed into the hierarchical social order introduced by the later Indo-European conquerors, they continued under the Norman yoke as the serf-like betaghs *adscripti glebae*, though located on their traditional lands in clustered settlements which, like those that survived in the non-manorial parts of the country, came through the vicissitudes of the 16th and 17th centuries to be mapped by the Ordnance Surveyors in the middle of the nineteenth century."³²

²⁷ibid, and in the south-east of county Down; Buchanan, 1958, p.109-120.

²⁸Buchanan, 1970, p.152. McCourt identifies a "marginal crescentic belt of receding native culture", the refuge areas being the peripheral north, west, and south (1971, p.140-141).

²⁹McCourt, 1971, p.140-141; 156.

³⁰ibid, p.131, 135-136; Proudfoot, 1959, p.116; McCourt, 1950, p.91-92 for examples of sizes.

³¹Buchanan, 1970, p.153.

³²McCourt, 1971, p.153. While McCourt recognizes the formal instability of the cluster across time and the tendency for individual houses to become clusters, he seems to date this phenomena from the 17th century; according to him it is from this period that the essential difference between the isolated farm and the cluster becomes blurred (1971, p.133-134). But Kenneth Nicholls has suggested that *betaghs* held individual family holdings which were probably subdivided during the population explosion of the 12th and 13th centuries in much the same way as holdings were subdivided in the decades leading up to the Famine in the mid-19th century. And given McCourt's demonstration of the emergence of clusters from single holdings in the latter period, he criticizes the quoted hypothesis: "What strange mechanisms of population control and/or recruitment operated to preserve this continuity is not made clear, nor is any specific instance put forward as an illustration" (Nicholls, 1982, p.379 (footnote)). The same author more generally criticizes assumptions of a historically static Gaelic Irish society (1976, p.3-4, 21 (footnote)).

c. Supporting evidence

An important reference, cited by the authors in support of the argument, was Séan Mac Airt's short speculative paper on the toponymy of county Armagh, published in 1955. Their account of his text is this: Mac Airt, examining the place-name element *baile* suggests that it is a very old pre-Goidelic word which referred, or came to refer to, a specific form of settlement³³ distinct from the rath.³⁴ Where the 'bally' element occurs relatively frequently in townland names, the pre-Goidelic³⁵ population may have remained in occupation of their lands following subsequent Goidelic expansion, though functioning as bondsmen/plebian cultivators.³⁶ These lands, then, are a possible repository of the supposed tradition of clustered settlement descending from the Bronze Age and beyond; when Proudfoot, working on county Down, mapped rath sites with townlands whose names are prefixed by 'Bally' he argued "...that they tended to occupy complementary areas."³⁷ This perception has, however, been challenged.³⁸ When reading Mac Airt's text in conjunction with those of his interpreters, three points stand out. Firstly, and simply, there is neither intimation of clustering nor of bond status in his statement. Indeed he writes "A likely inference then would be that where our 'ballys' are relatively numerous, earlier peoples had been left mainly undisturbed by Goidelic expansion. So, the old Ulidians held fast in Antrim and Down..."³⁹, hardly implying forcible subjugation. Secondly Mac Airt, noting that *baile* is not attested as a place-name element in documents before the 11th or 12th century, suggests "...that it is a very old pre-Goidelic word which eventually manages to gain recognition. For the present I shall assume that it is an old plebian term for a settlement, as opposed to the Goidelic *ráth*."⁴⁰ The stated opposition here is primarily between terms and not between types of settlement to which those terms might be taken to refer. Mac Airt does not say that *baile* is a term for a plebian settlement, although presumably it could

³³Buchanan, 1970, p.149; 1973, p.614.

³⁴Proudfoot, 1959, p.113.

³⁵Buchanan uses the term "pre-Celtic" (1970, p.149; 1973, p.615).

³⁶*ibid*; Proudfoot, 1959, p.113; McCourt, 1971, p.157; Glasscock wrote that Mac Airt "...thought that the term *baile*...referred to the clustered settlements in which lived cultivators of the lower strata of society" (p.282), but there is no suggestion of this.

³⁷Proudfoot, 1959, p.113.

³⁸J.H. Andrews, working from Proudfoot's mapping, calculated "...that the 28 per cent of co. Down which has a 'bally' name contains about 23 per cent of the raths recorded in the county, so the complementarity of these two features cannot be regarded as outstandingly impressive" (Andrews, 1974, p.4). McCourt extended the mapping and concluded that "...their complementary relationship to raths while broadly apparent in Ulster is not so clear-cut in the rest of the country where indeed the distribution of 'ballys' is perplexing" (McCourt, 1971, p.157).

³⁹Mac Airt, p.3.

⁴⁰*ibid*..

have become so as the two words and their significations were brought into dialogue. In this case the tendency is to characterize the term by general usage and particular signification instead of, and this is the way I take Mac Airt's text, by restricted usage (restricted to a class/ethno-linguistic group) and a potentially more general signification. One senses therefore, through Mac Airt's syntax, a (as far as settlement form is concerned) typological indeterminacy inhering in the use of the term; would a rath, as "a settlement", have been understood as a *baile* by the pre-Goidels in the sense that, say, "dwelling" or "farmstead" to us does not imply a particular spatial disposition? Such indeterminacy would seem compatible with later readings of the word⁴¹, as well as with puzzling instances such as the equation of rath with *baile* in Cormac's Glossary of c.900 A.D. as cited by Proudfoot.⁴² Finally, the stratigraphy of the terms *baile* and *dún*, *lios*, and *rúth* is unclear. While the latter three may be taken to refer to similar phenomena⁴³, Mac Airt suggests that only the last is Goidelic, and that each of the three terms is, in chronological order, associated with colonization by a distinct linguistic group.⁴⁴ Whatever the political and social relationships between the inhabitants of the *baile*, *dún* and *lios*, it's clear that Mac Airt uses the term Goidelic to refer to a sub-group of Celts identified by language and, according to Mac Airt's chronology of place-name givers, arriving late; so an area identified as being one of pre-Goidelic continuity would not automatically be one in which Celtic settlement form is absent. In fact the implication is that *baile* itself is likely to be a Celtic word.⁴⁵

The incorporation of the 'bally' element in placenames was, however, subsequently to be the subject of a different hypothesis. Liam Price suggested that the great increase in the use of names pre-fixed by *baile* between the 13th and 16th centuries, as evidenced in manuscript material, was due to the native

⁴¹Generally "place"; and as used in place-names in the 12th century documents a delimited "piece of land" defined by a qualifying suffix, usually an occupying tribal or family group. In this period "*baile* cannot ... be restricted to its present-day meaning 'hamlet, group of houses', much less 'town, village.'" In 13th century documents *baile* seems to be taken as equivalent to the Latin *villa*, English *tūn* (farmstead, hamlet or village, manor or estate), and latterly occurs increasingly with suffixes which describe the situation of the place. It crystallizes in townland names as the "...name of a farm or of an area comprising more than one farm." (Price, p.119-123). Earlier, Sullivan had suggested that the meaning of *baile* had moved from a place of occupation, a homestead and lands attached, to a more general and abstract conception of place. There is no sense of the plebian attached to the term here; indeed Sullivan has no qualms in locating a royal *dún* in the *baile* which, in its most extensive signification, he sees as a subdivision of land cognate with the Latin *Pagus*. (Sullivan, p.lxxxiv).

⁴²Proudfoot, 1959, p.113.

⁴³Buchanan, for instance, describes Duneight as a rath (1970, p.149) and comments "...the dun (i.e. rath)..." (1973, p.614). But often *dún* has more implicit defensive overtones. Sullivan classified the three according to physical features and the corresponding social and legal position of the occupier. The *dún* is understood as the residence of a king. Interestingly he seems to suggest that the *lios* (the homestead of a lord) was unenclosed. (Sullivan, p.ccciv-cccv).

⁴⁴Mac Airt, p.3.

⁴⁵ibid, p.5.

Irish seizing English settlements during the Gaelic reconquest of the 14th century and translating the names given by the settlers into Irish.⁴⁶ The English names, by this time established, were likely to have incorporated the suffix *tūn* which would have been Gaelicized as *baile*. Price notes that 'bally' names are most dense in areas which were settled by the Anglo-Normans, but which reverted to Irish occupation; Jones Hughes too noted this distribution, dense in what he called the "hybrid areas", and pointed out that, in the townland names of these areas, 'bally' is found in conjunction with Norman names to a much greater extent than 'town' is with Irish names.⁴⁷ If this thesis is correct, a high density of 'bally' names would be an index of disjunction, and not of continuity.

The issue of the interchangeability of *tūn* and *baile* leads on to a further point. In the English documentation of the 13th century we find the Latin word *villa*, the English *tūn*, and the Irish *baile* being used as if equivalent. Proudfoot suggested that this was evidence that native clustered settlement existed at this period, as the colonists would naturally render *baile* into the English and Latin words which most closely represented the observed phenomenon; so the characteristic traits of *baile*-settlement must be approximated by *tūn*- and *villa*-settlement. "In twelfth - fourteenth century documents *baile* is equated with *ton* and *villa*, both of which must have meant town or village in England at the time. There is therefore reasonable evidence to suggest the occurrence of clustered settlements in those areas for which medieval documents exist..."⁴⁸ A pre-Anglo-Norman antiquity is assumed on the basis that Irish personal names are found appended to all three forms. Glasscock concurred with the spatial model, writing that both *tūn* and *villa* implied "...in the English sense, some form of nucleated settlement."⁴⁹ The difficulty here, besides the problematic assumption that an Irish name is automatically an index of continuity and survival, is that *villa* was used, as Price notes, as one of a variety of terms to denote 'premises'; a parcel of land would have been involved, but the extent and character of built form is uncertain.⁵⁰ Likewise, the most usual meanings for *tūn* in place-names are 'a farmstead', 'a hamlet or village' and 'manor, estate'; the English settlers used *tūn* to name their holdings, and no clustering is necessarily implied.⁵¹

⁴⁶Price, p.124.

⁴⁷Price, p.125; Jones Hughes, 1970, p.255-256.

⁴⁸Proudfoot, 1959, p.113.

⁴⁹Glasscock, p.284.

⁵⁰Price, p.125.

⁵¹ibid, p.123; Muhr notes that "town" originally meant "settlement (and lands appertaining)" (p.246). While the OED gives usages denoting "A (small) group or cluster of dwellings or buildings" from c.725-1888 we have also such definitions as "The enclosed land surrounding or belonging to a single dwelling ... the enclosed land of a village community..." from 601-4 -1785, and "An enclosed place or piece of ground, an enclosure; a field, garden, yard, court" from c.725-1388 (p.320). John Dymmok, writing around 1600, rendered Ballybetaghs as "...Betaghs townes euery one conteininge 960 acres of arrable lande besydes

The areal sense of *baile*, the use of that element in designating a portion of land (and accompanying settlement), is exemplified in its incorporation in the names of units of land assessment. Although the nomenclature of the Gaelic land assessment system's structural components slips into focus only with the English documentation relating to the surveys and grants of lands of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the consensus is now that the matrix of small land units, which were found serviceable to medieval and modern colonist alike and which frequently survive (with a greater or lesser degree of amendment) into the present as townlands, generally derive from a period prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.⁵² Nicholls describes the essence of the system as "...the existence of a network of named and bounded units which retain their identity largely irrespective of the patterns of settlement and land utilization which may be imposed on them at any given time...".⁵³ These stable units, like game-board squares, were well suited to the dynamic tenurial situation in Gaelic Ireland; the lands forming an estate, constructed of such units and held in joint proprietorship by an occupying lineage group, were periodically redistributed among the eligible members. McErlean has described how the modern townland appears to be derived from the subdivision of larger units; working from the aforementioned documents he outlined how these larger units retained currency, or at least left traces, in western and northern areas where the imprint of Anglo-Norman organization and practice was shallow and less enduring. In western Ulster the large unit was the *Ballybetagh*⁵⁴, in Connacht the *Baile*.⁵⁵ While neither represented a mathematically quantified area, the boundaries instead apparently being fixed according to assessed potential for exploitation, the latter seems consistently to have been a smaller unit than the former. Connacht shows a strong regional consistency with the modern townland usually equating with a fourfold division of the *Baile*. Ulster is more complex - one

woodds, boggs, and pastures..."; Sir John Davis gave the same acreage and translated the term as "... a town able to maintain hospitality..." (Dymmok, p.12, 62 (footnote)). The term 'village' is equally difficult to negotiate; Andrews shows that it occurs in the Civil Survey of the 1650s in reference to tracts of land apparently devoid of houses (1974, p.3). Later he commented that "Words like 'town' and 'village' generally denote communities rather than spatial patterns..." (1989, no pagination).

⁵²McErlean writes that "The dating evidence, though limited, suggests that the tenurial framework imposed on the landscape by this system was largely present from the beginning of the Irish medieval period in the 12th century, having its origins much further back"; and he considers that the ultimate origins of the archaic land system evident in west Ulster "...must be in the prehistoric Iron Age..." (p.335). Nicholls feels that many of the units in the network might pre-date the Anglo-Norman invasion by five centuries or more (1982, p.379) but that a complex assessment hierarchy based upon these existing units was not constructed until the later medieval period (1993, p.407). McNeill (p.89) and Simms (p.315) support a pre-medieval date. However Jones Hughes, examining townland names, proposed that "...over much of Leinster the network was designed for the reallocation of land among alien settlers mainly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries" (1970, p.244) and that in Western areas the framework may have been imposed over extensive areas as late as the seventeenth century (p.256). Evidence that McErlean gives from the 'Composicion Booke' of Connacht of 1585 shows a townland structure at this date.

⁵³Nicholls, 1993, p.407.

⁵⁴*baile biadhthaigh* - "lands of a food provider" (Muhr, p.245).

⁵⁵Nicholls seems to suggest that the term *Baile*, as a unit of assessment, appeared in Connacht with the development of the assessment system in, perhaps, the 12th century; "...it would seem that the existing units, normally the holdings of separate septs of lineages, were each taken as a *baile*." (1993, p.408).

quarter of the *Ballybetagh* prevails as the unit underlying the modern townland in Co. Donegal; elsewhere in the province (with some anomalies) one sixteenth is the 'townland division.'⁵⁶ McErlean tells us that the "...Ballybetagh and Baile functioned as collective sept estates..."⁵⁷ and examining evidence for the former suggests that its geography was organized to circumscribe the necessary gamut of resources to ensure its feasibility as an autonomous unit of production under Gaelic technique and hence the independence of the occupying sept.⁵⁸ Evidence from west Ulster showing a tendency for a regular numerical nesting of the number of smaller units within larger is cited to illustrate the status of the larger territory as the base unit.⁵⁹

The question of the servile *betaghs*, the *betagii* who figure enticingly in the Anglo-Norman manorial documents that have come down to us, lies toward the centre of the chronological spectrum proposed for the clachan. This is a strategic and important site, a couple between epochs. Its promise is, through a demonstration of settlement continuity, an account of why, in McCourt's distribution map of clachans in 1832-40, such dense concentrations appear in certain areas of strong Anglo-Norman influence. There is, however, no clear evidence that these unfree tenants were generally living in house clusters on manorial lands; the claim that they were, and hence their relevance to the wider argument, rests on a number of inferences and assumptions. Of these the most significant are the notion, outlined above, that the *betaghs* who appear on the manors are the same grouping who formed the servile class in Gaelic society, a group whose only change was in overlord,⁶⁰ and the understanding that their tenurial condition was often appropriate to clustered dwelling. The first point posits ethnic⁶¹ and class continuity, bringing with it the claim for the continuity of typology of settlement (the assumed clusters), and, due to the tendency to see the group as static, coherent, and largely closed, the suggestion of continuity of occupation, from prehistory to the nineteenth century, of the actual clusters themselves.⁶² It is clear that those who held a *betagh* tenancy were

⁵⁶McErlean, p.318-327.

⁵⁷ibid, p.330.

⁵⁸ibid, p.332.

⁵⁹ibid, p.329.

⁶⁰"These betaghs ... or 'nativi', had been the unfree element of Gaelic society for whom the Norman conquest merely meant a change of overlords" (McCourt, 1971, p.143); "There are indications that they [the betaghs] were bondsmen to the free classes of native society..." (Buchanan, 1973, p.609).

⁶¹And so ethnic homogeneity in the settlements becomes a potential sign of antiquity. Buchanan, for instance, writes that the *betaghs* were "...invariably Irish..." (1973, p.609); although he does not claim continuity of occupation of actual sites, the inflexibility of description aligns with that idea. Curtis, to whom he refers, elsewhere gives evidence to the contrary including the strange case of the Borough of Kilmaclen in which in 1341, before the Black Death, 30 burgesses were residing, 27 of whom were English, and all of whom held *betagh* tenancies (Curtis, p.61, 67-8).

⁶²McCourt, 1971, p.153; as quoted above.

usually of Irish origin and Otway-Ruthven proposed, noting the geography of their holdings and their form of tenancy, that they "...cultivated on the native system."⁶³ Research on the modern era suggests that the house cluster was correlate with the rundale system of agriculture; and the implication is that if the *betaghs* were engaged in practices akin to it they may well have been living in clusters.

In making a case for the continuity of the settlements, McCourt equated the "...servile cultivators of the laws (*bothaig* or *scullogues*) living in their clustered kin-groups..." [that is, the 'classical' Irish laws of 7th-8th centuries A.D.], with the Anglo-Norman *betaghs*; the latter and the former were the same group.⁶⁴ The situation however appears less straightforward. In his short paper "The Origins of the *Betagh*", Gearóid Mac Niocaill authoritatively argued that the Latinized form *betagius* found in the Anglo-Norman documents was derived not from the Irish *bothach* (cottier, a tenant-at-will by uncertain services under classical Irish law, and not *adscriptus glebae*⁶⁵) but rather from *biatach*. The general sense of the latter is of an individual, base or free, who has become the client of a noble; the noble advances a fief, usually of stock, to his client who reciprocates with a food-rent. Mac Niocaill concludes that "The *biatach* is the typical Irish commoner: that the name should be taken over by settlers with a sense identical to that of the villein of England implies that the great bulk of the native Irish were lumped into this category by the settlers."⁶⁶ Although in Gaelic Ireland hereditary lands theoretically retained their

⁶³Otway-Ruthven, p.3. The distinction here is between an Anglo-Norman system of "...fixed and permanent strips of land..." and a Celtic system of "...impermanent strips..." (p.2). Down holds a similar opinion; "...they may have cultivated by their own native methods, possibly using the infield and outfield system..." (p.468). Otway-Ruthven and Buchanan report that the *betaghs* often held specific townlands, separate from the other holdings on the manor (Otway-Ruthven, p.3; Buchanan, 1973, p.609). In such isolation their own holdings could presumably remain disengaged from the system of three-course rotation practised elsewhere. Such isolation however does not necessarily point to difference in agricultural practice; Buchanan writes that Otway-Ruthven's analysis of available charters suggests that "...each social group among the tenants often held land on separate parts of the manor" (Buchanan, 1973, p.609). The *betaghs*' holding of specific townlands might be seen as promising the survival of a Gaelic unit of settlement which maintains a coherence of land and inhabitants and their practices, but here again we run into difficulties. The townland framework inherited by the Anglo-Normans was assumed by them in the letting-out and composition of manorial lands; and so we find English freeholders holding, on an individual and shared basis, distinct and recognisable townlands (Simms, p.311-315). Furthermore, Curtis, analysing the Rental of the Manor of Lisronagh, which contains the 'classic' instance of *betagh* tenancy, could only relate two of the seven current or former *betagh* 'graigs' to modern townlands (p.62), although he allowed that "...most of the Irish *betaghs* seem to have lived in petty local septs, which fact indicates antiquity" (p.72). Curtis renders *grange* for *gráig*, a translation that Nicholls takes issue with; the latter suggests that *gráig* might primarily denote a stock-farm or cattle-steading in contradistinction to the tillage establishment implied by *grange* (1982, p.380-1). Buchanan notes that cattle seems to have been the *betaghs*' chief produce (1973, p.610). In similar fashion to the rundale holdings of the 18th and 19th centuries, the *betaghs* appear generally to have held their land as a joint-tenancy (Otway-Ruthven, p.12; Buchanan, 1973, p.609; Down, p.458), a condition compatible with rundale. Still, Curtis notes a *betagh* community, which he regards as a typical example of the tenure, of 13 individuals, recorded in the Pipe Roll of Cloyne in 1366, some of whom are English or Norman and all of whom have separate holdings (p.67).

⁶⁴McCourt, 1971, p.153.

⁶⁵Mac Niocaill, 1966, p.292-3.

⁶⁶*ibid*, p.297; "The equivalent of villeins, they were almost universally Gaelic Irish, the conquered population, which the colonists gathered indiscriminately into one class" (Down, p.457).

independence while the owner was in clientship to a noble, it was increasingly the case that the free client was required to perform labour services as part of his obligations. Mac Niocaill posits that, with the coming of the Anglo-Normans, "This being so, an assimilation of the status of the *biatach*, or client, to that of the villein was natural and inevitable; and from his assimilation in status followed an assimilation in tenure."⁶⁷ Trying to consolidate the labour base of the manor economy, the Anglo-Normans developed the villein class, the *betaghs* of the documents, largely out of the native Irish. Curtis writes: "They crushed many of the free into feudal serfdom undoubtedly, as we find in many complaints, and almost made the word 'hibernicus' in the planted areas the legal equivalent of serf, 'villanus' and 'nativus'."⁶⁸ If we can assume that the Latinized *betagii* referred to the same social group, at least in part, as its Irish precursor then the betagh settlements on the manors cannot be taken to be simply and universally the characteristic settlements of a predestined servile underclass inherited by new masters. We must allow the location there of representatives of the Gaelic free classes whose tradition of settlement was, on the terms of the theory set out, dispersed. Furthermore if, despite this, the betaghs were uniformly living in clusters as suggested it becomes difficult to posit any great age for them generally as the clusters may have been newly formed by individuals who previously resided in isolated dwellings. Or new settlements may have been initiated by a concentration of the Irish on restricted lands as the economic geography of the manors were composed, as lands and holdings were recognized, defined and occupied by settlers. It may be that pre-conquest forms of settlement were simply maintained in some manorial lands occupied by the Irish; this is especially likely to be the case in peripheral areas in which Anglo-Norman power and resources were diminished, where there were examples of Irish men integrated at all levels of feudal society, where emphasis remained on pastoralism, and where the manor was primarily a fiscal device with an attenuated physical impact.⁶⁹

One of the difficulties of the thesis is that it organizes the dispersed/clustered duality around relatively rigid ethnic, legal, socio-economic and corresponding functional criteria with the whole complex then being taken as maintaining its characteristic internal relationships throughout the periods between major historic ruptures.⁷⁰ The abstraction of this view can admit little contingency

⁶⁷ibid, p.298.

⁶⁸Curtis, p.72.

⁶⁹McNeill, 1975, p.37.

⁷⁰The "invasion neurosis" to which Andrews alludes; 1974, p.1.

for regional variations in practice⁷¹, is insensitive to the dynamics of the society in question and consequently ignores the possibility of structural changes which may disarticulate the theorized connections. It has been argued that changes of precisely this nature appeared in the lead-up to the entry of the Anglo-Normans. Having located him in society we now must ask if it is likely that, at the time of the conquest, the Irish *biatach* dwelt in dispersed form? F.J. Byrne and Donncha Ó Corráin interpret Gaelic polity in the 11th and 12th centuries as moving, internally, toward a feudalism.⁷² Tribalism with its relatively autonomous collectivities was foundering; the rulers of the old tribal divisions were increasingly subordinated within a hierarchical structure that culminated in a provincial king whose authority and personality penetrated the tiers below him⁷³ and who now could evidently grant away all land held under him as if it was his personal property.⁷⁴ Against the instability of this nascent feudalism, then, the radical, prolonged, and innovative⁷⁵ violence of 12th century Gaelic Ireland can be seen as the struggle between the provincial kings for domination, and ultimately for high-kingship. This militarism was supported on newly deep cleavages within society; kings could now mount campaigns with large armies for months at a time, and maintain fleets on rivers and at sea. Byrne writes that "This implies the existence of a military caste, men who had specialist skills, who owned horses and could maintain them, who could afford to leave their farms to be tilled by serfs or slaves."⁷⁶ In the ranks of these slaves, filled out with unfortunates traded by the mercenary Hiberno-Norse war-fleets, we find, according to Byrne, the *biatach*; "...the freeman of the ancient law tracts, bound only by certain limited services and renders to his lord, had almost certainly long been reduced to the servile status of *biatach* or *fuidir*...".⁷⁷ Byrne appeals to Mac Niocaill's text to substantiate this, but it is difficult to see how it can. While Mac Niocaill allows that the distinction

⁷¹Above all it is the ubiquity of the enclosed farmstead on which, despite marked variation in concentration (and hotly contested explanations for this), the assumption that there was a widespread uniformity in settlement form throughout Gaelic Ireland rests.

⁷²Ó Corráin detects a waning in the legal independence of the tuath or petty tribal kingdom from at least the 8th century. And by the 11th and 12th centuries "...the greater kings...partitioned kingdoms, appointed subordinate rulers, granted away whole territories, expelled royal dynasties, made dependent lords of their subordinate kings, and developed power-based territorial lordships which bear striking resemblance to the feudal kingdoms of Europe" (p.29-32).

⁷³By, for example, the already noted elaboration of a land assessment system for the purpose of exactions; Toirrdelbach O Connor (and his son Ruaidrí) seem to have so organized Connacht in the 12th century (Nicholls, 1993, p.408). By the 11th and 12th centuries, the title for a ruler of a tuath has waned from *rí* (king) to *tuiseach* (leader) or *tigerna* (lord); the status of the individual in question now appears as officer for the provincial king (Ó Corráin, p.30; Byrne, p.6).

⁷⁴*ibid*, p.431.

⁷⁵"The endemic nature of twelfth-century warfare is itself an indication of how greatly Irish society had changed since the viking era. The Norse had introduced the concept of total warfare with no respect for sanctuary, and had built permanent military and naval encampments. It is notable how the term *cocad*, 'war', now tends in the annals to replace the *cath* or one-day ritual battle of the Old Irish period" (Byrne, p.10).

⁷⁶*ibid*, p.11.

⁷⁷*ibid*.

between the labour services required by the lord from base and free clients had probably dissolved by the 12th century⁷⁸, it is in fact from a text of this date that he adduces the status of the *biatach* as economically self-sufficient and as somewhat higher than the *sâertach* (a 'freeman', a commoner not in clientship to a lord)⁷⁹; the bond between *biatach* and lord has principally a contractual, and not customary, character. As opposed to the *dímháin*, the landless man, he is a man of property. It has been estimated that the minimum land requirement for an independent farmer was around 70 acres⁸⁰ - close to Proudfoot's estimate of the average rath-farm in County Down. But is the 70 acre figure an anachronism by this date?

If, despite this, Byrne is correct and the mass of 'freemen' did experience a radical decline in status before the invasion, structurally the evacuation of the common landowning class at the centre of society, one must posit a change in settlement pattern accompanying material decline. And it seems likely that the trend would be toward some form of collective dwelling with the loss of self-sufficiency and the problematizing of the economic base of life; presumably hereditary allodial lands would be contracted, or completely alienated, with holdings maintained increasingly fragmented by partible inheritance. Presumably also this process would have involved considerable abandonment of raths, thought to be motifs of status as well as functional items; the historic movement seems to have been in this direction whether or not one accepts Byrne's analysis and chronology.⁸¹ This would align with Nicholl's analysis of the social situation developing in medieval Gaelic Ireland; the power of the kings over land was extending and increasing, facilitated by the context of a thinly populated and strongly pastoral society in which land rights had a correspondingly low differentiation. Indeed, by the late 16th century in Antrim and Down, albeit an extreme example, the 'freeholders' had disappeared from view, and what was reported was a two-tier society of lords and a peripatetic cultivating class⁸² whose arable labours were held in low esteem. These were the good natured and accommodating churls, tormented by their lord's exactions, whom Sir Thomas Smith

⁷⁸Mac Niocaill, 1966, p.298 (footnote); Nicholls suggests that the imposition of agricultural labour services on the lands of the 'freeholders' was a response to an acute shortage of labour; but this would tend to date the new requirements from the arrival of the Black Death in the mid-14th century (Nicholls, 1976, p.13).

⁷⁹Mac Niocaill, 1966, p.295-6; on p.297 he notes the slide of the *biatach* "...from the self-sufficient farmer of the 12th century texts to the rack-rented tenant of the inquisitions of the 16th century."

⁸⁰Mallory and Woodman, p.61. I have followed these authors in equating 'economic self-sufficiency' with 'independence' (as Mitchell puts it). Mitchell makes clear that the 70 acre small farmer would have to cooperate with others to make up a plough team. But this is evidently not self-sufficiency as Mac Niocaill understands it. To the *bó-aire* of the earlier period he assigns around 700 acres of arable land and his own plough team (Mitchell; Mac Niocaill, 1972, p.65).

⁸¹Nicholls, for example, detects an increase in the amount of land in possession of the royal and chiefly lineages in the 16th century, as compared to the 12th century; 1993, p.431.

⁸²Nicholls, 1976, p.10.

expected would flock to his colony in the Ards of Down and submit themselves.⁸³ Kenneth Nicholls, critical of the straightforward transference of English legal terminology into the Irish situation, has consistently argued against claims for the existence of a servile or semi-servile native class in pre-invasion Ireland⁸⁴ and he suggests that the term *biatach* neither had nor developed any sense of low status in Gaelic Irish usage.⁸⁵ Melisu Macfeilecan, the individual who, with his land and sons was granted away with the lands of Baldoyle by Diarmid Mac Murchadha in the mid-12th century was, Nicholls feels, no serf but simply the former allodial owner of the lands and victim of the extension of the powers of his lord.⁸⁶ If this is correct here we have a single farming family, with or without dependents, of the sort that would be expected to inhabit a rath. Indeed, Nicholl's suggestion is that, on manorial lands, the *betagh* communities apparent on the later rentals emerged from the subdivision, in a period of rising population, of what had been single family holdings. Interestingly, the only comment that Curtis makes regarding the settlement patterns of the *betaghs* on manorial lands, save for the suggestion that the inhabitants of Baldoyle "...cultivated the land and dwelt together as a community, not as individuals...", is that those occupying the lands of Cathymor in the Manor of Lisronagh may have dwelt in a stone fort.⁸⁷ Melisu, his family, and dependent cottiers (if they existed), may have arranged themselves in and around a rath; or they may have lived in a cluster or in unenclosed dispersed dwellings. But whatever the case with Melisu, the members of this land occupying 'freehold' class in Gaelic Ireland were to experience increasing settlement instability and geographic and tenorial dislocation in the following centuries. The situation in Antrim and Down in the late 16th century has been mentioned. In Fermanagh, in 1608, albeit after a devastating war, there was reportedly no "...fixed village."⁸⁸ In Munster the lords were able to take possession of lands within their territories by imposing high exactions which, in a period of low population, the owners could not meet. Having expelled the latter (who theoretically remained in ownership) the lord could graze his cattle upon the lands, or set it to

⁸³Smith, no pagination.

⁸⁴"...there is no need to postulate a servile or semi-servile class as such, and in this I would disagree with the same scholar when he takes the much-quoted charter by which Diarmid Mac Murchadha granted to All Hallows, Dublin, the lands of Baldoyle with its men, 'scilicet Melisu Macfeilecan cum filiis et nepotibus suis' as a proof of the existence in pre-invasion Ireland of a class of *adscriptus glebae*" (1982, p.378; "Certainly, at the close of the sixteenth century, the lords claimed a right to retain their tenants and denied the latter's right to leave. But this does not, I think, entitle us to regard Irish society as being divided into a free and servile class" (1972, p.68); "One response of the Irish lords to this shortage of labour was to claim that their subjects in general (and not just, as has been imagined, a hypothetical service class, for whose existence there is no documentary evidence) were bound to remain in their service and had no right to leave" (1993, p.409).

⁸⁵Nicholls, 1982, p.378-9.

⁸⁶*ibid*, p.378; Nicholls, 1993, p.431.

⁸⁷Curtis, p.62, 64-5.

⁸⁸Sir John Davis writing to Salisbury; Murray (ed), p.lx.

tenants for cultivation.⁸⁹ The inconstancy of land occupation was blamed by Spenser and Moryson for the lack of material investment (and hence economic surplus) by the Irish tenantry in their holdings at this period; leases were for one, two, or three years, or at the lord's will.⁹⁰ In such conditions houses would have been flimsy, and the construction of *raths* unlikely (although re-occupation would always be a possibility) by all but the most locationally and economically secure. The latter would have been individuals with considerable capital resources whether land owners or those (with dependants and sub-tenants of their own) established on a large holding belonging to others.⁹¹ Nicholls suggests that in and around the *rath* or castle of a person of substance would dwell dependents and family members.⁹² Elsewhere can we generally picture a pattern of both unenclosed (although simple enclosure by fencing is always a possibility) isolated and clustered dwellings? Taken together these would be the habitations of tenants and tenant groups of varying status (landowning or otherwise) and labourers.⁹³ This statement may seem catch-all and disappointingly undefined, but have we any reason to feel this may not have been the case? It should be noted that, for example, the 'clustered' category need not infer occupation by a single class; one would expect to find dependent labourers adjacent to those they served. Furthermore, on this model a strict essential distinction between isolated and clustered dwelling breaks down and the sort of dynamic that McCourt demonstrated in the modern period may emerge. In morphological terms a *rath* is no mark of dispersal - houses cluster in and around it, and the compact farm breaks down into a collective one given certain environmental conditions. And, an isolated holding need not have an earthen or stone enclosure.⁹⁴

⁸⁹Nicholls, 1993, p.430.

⁹⁰Moryson insisted that the tenants were tied to the lord, unable to leave for another, and viewed them as virtual slaves; "...they have an ill custom, that tenants are reputed proper to those lands on which they dwell, without liberty to remove their dwelling under another landlord...". He tells us that the English judges, travelling through Ireland after the Desmond rebellion, informed all the "inferior gentlemen and common people" that they were not slaves but free men (Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.242, 245-7, 276-7). Spenser, (who recognized a freeholding class who let land) however, perceived the cultivators as fully mobile, this being a defense against over exploitation by their lord (Spenser, p.71, 120-122).

⁹¹e.g. see Nicholls, 1976, p.12-13; his "rural capitalist".

⁹²Nicholls, 1993, p.404.

⁹³Nicholls encourages us to see parallels between the situation in late medieval Ireland and in Scotland. In the latter the "...lesser chief, head of a junior lineage, or tacksman..." held the pivot at the centre of society; estates, based on former clan territories were divided into tacks, made up of townships and controlled by the tacksman who sustained agricultural production. The latter dwelt in a 'baile', fortified (in *rath* fashion) or unfortified (such as the Tigh Mor at the Udal, North Uist, which can be dated back to the 12th century). At times this may have been so close to the body of the population in their 'bailtean' as to be archaeologically indistinguishable from them - "There must have been a chief's or tackman's baile alongside the much more numerous versions, for tenants, followers, and adherents in accordance with the pattern still discernable in the 18th century." There is some evidence for the continuity of sites here: "It is indeed clear in most cases ... that the pre-clearance/pre-improvement baile, where it survives, either incorporates, lies on, or is proximate to its predecessors whose survival is so rare as to render their very existence almost a speculation" (Crawford).

⁹⁴Some archaeological information, pertaining to the 1st millenium A.D., should be presented here. At Oughtymore on the north coast of Ireland, well-crafted ornaments were found, appropriate to the status of a

d. *The critique*

The formulation of Evans and his students was to draw considerable criticism from other geographers and indeed the emerging voices of consent and dissent, polarized around a north/south division, were organized with the sort of yearned-for distributional clarity so absent from the material in question. The charge that they were up on was one of undue geographic and chronological generalization of phenomena which were either observed in the present or which could only be traced back with any confidence to the closing years of the 17th century. A case in point was the generalization of the term *clachan*, criticized by Ó Danachair and others.⁹⁵ The evidence against was marshalled with panache by John Andrews in a series of wry and usefully sceptical conference papers in which he amusedly viewed the attempt to substantiate, with an inevitable lack of firm historical evidence, a theory which, the implication is, owed more to belief than to rational analysis. Most of Andrews' points hit home, but some fall short.⁹⁶ The reactions to the papers are informative and widely differing; one geographer has recently called

rath-dweller; but there is no sign of enclosures (Mallory and Woodman). Aerial surveys of Co. Antrim have identified a number of villages, together with *raths* and associated field enclosures. Williams views these as 'booley-villages' (villages, usually high-level, seasonally inhabited on the summer pasturing grounds) given their sharp morphological differences to the dispersed settlement pattern of low-land areas. Given that he accounts for the lack of surviving *rath* field systems in low-land areas by destruction by modern agriculture, it is difficult to see how he could dismiss the notion that such villages may also have occurred at lower levels. Notable is the site at Ballyutoag Townland, a large village within a series of enclosures which may have accommodated around 100 people. It has a final occupation date of 710 A.D. and there are signs of cultivation. Closeby is a *rath* with associated field system which may be co-eval; if this is the case is this a settlement of bondsmen controlled from the rath, or a community of dependents and kin? If not, might it be a development from the rath? (Williams, 1983, 1984) The large enclosure within which most of the house platforms are sited bears a resemblance to the enclosed ecclesiastical sites which Swan has examined and which he feels may be related to raths and may mark the ancient settlements of a class subservient to the free farmers of the raths. Here, although McCourt, Buchanan, Proudfoot and all are not acknowledged, we are returned to one of the theorized geographical models (Swan).

⁹⁵ Ó Danachair's comments focus on the operational problems for historical studies posed by the blanket use of the term. However, he also hints at the inappropriateness of the term for any form in Ireland. Crawford feels that the term is incorrect for what is being referred to and defines a *clachan* as a township in which a parish church is located with the use extending to the church itself and to its site. The correct term in Scotland is *baile*, and he expects applicability to Ireland as well; but the problems inherent in this usage should by now be clear. Still, however unfortunately homogenizing the adoption of the term was, it is important not to censor the fact that it was collected; and it is a pity in this regard that McCourt's sensitivity to, and collection of, variations in terminology seems to have been generally occluded and gone unregistered with critics (Ó Danachair, 1968; Crawford, p.363; McCourt, 1950, p.89).

⁹⁶ For example, elements of Andrews' falsificationist attack (1974, p.2) on the view that privileges ethnic causality, generally identifying certain traits with particular ethnic groups, do not ring true. Such a view can withstand anomalies unlike the scientific theorem which aims at an absolute account. Only the case of the most obsessive ethnic determinist would be demolished by the realization that a native Irish town developed in the 16th century; and in fact the apparent singularity of the phenomenon tends more to confirm than to deny, for a certain period at least, characteristic native settlement form. And surely finding '*Rath*' in conjunction with a Norman personal name in place-names is alone no evidence that the settlers were involved in a practice of settlement equivalent to the Celtic farmstead; especially so when we are aware that they adapted the existing earthworks of *rath* farmsteads as defensive bases for their own distinctive built form.

them, unfairly, "ephemera"⁹⁷, while another, Kevin Whelan, has claimed that they represent a "...devastating critique."⁹⁸ Whelan mentions this at the outset of a paper which seeks to deny the antiquity of the clachan form, but it should be noted that Andrews is circumspect on this. In his 1974 paper Andrews writes "This paper is not concerned with whether these things are very old, or even with whether there are good reasons for treating them as old." Andrews' text is not truly, as Whelan claims, a criticism of the methodology itself, but it is rather an attempt to identify and articulate certain predispositions latent at all points in the work. Thus his method is to examine interpretations that have been made, to detect irrationalities in these (unacknowledgement of certain evidence and ambiguity, interpretation that evidence cannot rationally sustain), to demonstrate a common tendency in these misinterpretations, and thus display the presuppositions that lie behind them. The sum effect of Andrews' examination of the grounding of the speculations on the clachan's antiquity, however diagnostically cogent, is not to disprove the case, but rather to reinstate ambiguity. Sometimes, however, his revisions are themselves questionable as, for example, in his examination of the evidence for *rath/cashel* and cluster dualities.⁹⁹ At Twomile Stone, one of the sites referred to by Buchanan, the suggestion that the *cashel* and huts are coeval does not rest just on "relative disposition" and so is not quite as tenuous as suggested. Rather the excavation report makes clear that there are two cashels. One, the archaeologist notes, could be of any age, but the other is connected with a field system which he felt sure was in use when the huts were occupied, a view supported by the discovery of a considerable quantity of cereal grains in the hut excavated.¹⁰⁰ But more importantly it is surely not wise for Andrews to rely upon the archaeologist's technical terminology to make his "main point" here, namely that the huts are not in a cluster but are in fact isolated dwellings. It may be difficult to define spatially what represents the outer limits of clustering, but a glance at the published plan of Twomile Stone confirms that the huts are strongly localized. If one had to place these on a scale of settlement ranging from the postulated pristine, isolated, and self-sufficient rath to the tightest of clusters, it would fall very close to the latter end. Pierre Flatrès, a geographer and not an archaeologist, suggested a figure of 100 metres as the distance between houses below which they may be said to be grouped and above which they

⁹⁷"This critique was contained in several intemperately - and condescendingly - worded conference papers Because they retain a usefulness to particular contemporary agendas ... these ephemera continue to circulate as rather unlikely *samizdat*." (Graham, 1994, p.193-4).

⁹⁸"Those postulations by Evans and his followers have been undermined by more recent work. In a devastating critique, John Andrews challenged the anthropogeographic methodology because of its fundamentally ahistoric chronological approach, its ethnic stereotyping and its unwarranted assumption (rather than demonstration) of millennial continuities." (Whelan, p.46).

⁹⁹Andrews, 1974, p.3.

¹⁰⁰Davies, p.99-102.

are isolated.¹⁰¹; which would, to judge from the published drawing, identify number of the huts at Twomile Stone as 'connected.' Technical terminology refers to parameters intrinsic to the discipline for which it was developed, and unsurprisingly is misleading when extended beyond that field. Were the huts, I wonder, *experienced* as a cluster, or as a series of isolated dwellings?

With the progress of detailed regional studies came information that seemed ominous for the hypothesized ubiquity and age of the clachan form. It was not unusual for such research to be published with an explicit challenge, muted or otherwise, to the 'clachan model'.¹⁰² But the most direct and sustained challenge was to come in 1991 from Kevin Whelan. Borrowing and supplementing regional distinctions outlined by Jones Hughes in his perspicacious "Society and Settlement in Nineteenth-Century Ireland" (and paradoxically rechristening them 'archetypes' while arguing for economic and societal dynamic) he isolates a "small-farm zone" comprising the marginal lands of western Atlantic Ireland and the arc of the drumlin belt running through south Ulster. It had been pointed out that most of the marginal lands, which displayed such dense settlement in the first O.S. maps, was probably late colonized by the dispossessed from more fertile areas¹⁰³ and Whelan attempts critical mileage from the fact that the picture presented by those maps developed from the hyperbolic population growth in the 200 years before the Great Famine. But this was well-known and acknowledged (despite the occasional diverging statement). In his early work on the subject McCourt had argued for the unity of clachans and rundale; but here Whelan asserts a more complex and specific unity, namely clachans/rundale/west of Ireland/poor land/high population/cooperative management - agreed land - joint labour system/hand-tool cultivation/lazy-beds.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹Flatrès, p.168.

¹⁰²So, for example, in the 'otherwise' category we have Burtchaell, p.121.

¹⁰³Jones Hughes, 1965, p.93-4; Aalen and Brody, p.30.

¹⁰⁴*The demographic setting was one of continually expanding population, initiated in the seventeenth century, but accelerating in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. In the relatively sealed social system of the west of Ireland such growth was absorbed locally, despite the inherent danger of overloading the carrying capacity of the environment. The development of the rundale system can be seen as a safety valve in the high pressure demographic regime. The massive labour input required to cultivate the poor quality land of the outfield was only feasible in a period of population growth. Co-operative management, agreed land use and a joint labour system for certain tasks were a sophisticated ecological adjustment to using a fragile environment, where technology and capital were limited but labour was unrestricted. Hand-tool cultivation (spade and sickle) was universal and the garden-like cultivation technique of *iomairí* (lazy-beds) was used universally." Hand tools and lazy-beds were correlate to poor land and high population, labour intensive but allowing steeply sloping land to be cultivated and increasing yields over and above that available from the plough. Correlate to the former only was the potato, but it sustained the latter, flourishing in wet and acidic soil as no other crop could. It was used to reclaim waste, preparing land for other crops (Whelan, p.54-5). The "sophisticated ecological adjustment" of "co-operative management" etc. sounds suspiciously like a good description of tribal organization, a form hardly unknown or geographically restricted in Gaelic Ireland. Limited technology and capital correspond to this but it is clear that such organization may exist without a fragile environment and unrestricted labour. Burtchaell, himself arguing against the antiquity of the clachan form, writes "The

And he concludes "Rundale villages or clachans are not the degraded relics of an archaic, aboriginal settlement form, practising primitive agriculture in 'refuge areas'. They are instead a sophisticated solution to specific ecological, environmental and social problems, which maximised the carrying capacity of a meagre environment in an expanding demographic regime."¹⁰⁵ Having defined the inter-relationship of these characteristics, it would be problematic for the argument if even one characteristic could be unpicked from the complex. The chance of finding documentary evidence for rundale before 1600 has seemed remote, but what if, for instance, we find rundale on good land, away from Whelan's "small farm zone"? Or rundale in operation under the plough instead of hand tools? If this was the case, would it still be rundale, or would it be something else? If it is accepted we could hardly hang on to the proposal that "Rundale villages or clachans ... are well-judged adaptations to marginal situations."¹⁰⁶ Good land is unlikely to be late settled and, in Whelan's formulation, would not necessitate the development of the rundale system.¹⁰⁷ If it does appear on such land it can no longer be taken to be a response to the factors Whelan outlines, it escapes from the historic juncture that he assigns to it, and the spectre of its antiquity again rises.

Firstly we should consider the chronological limits as evidenced in the documentary material, acknowledged and unacknowledged, that we do have. The well known first usage of the term 'rundale' in an Irish context is in the agriculturalist Arthur Young's report of his tour in Ireland in the late 1770s. This date is in accord with Whelan's formulation; he argues that the development of the rundale system was an imperative, and indeed was only a possibility, under quickening population growth, particularly from the middle of the 18th century. Turning away from Ireland, however, and looking to Scotland, we find that we can push back the date for the appearance of the term in documents considerably. There we find evidently widespread usage from quite an early date. The first attested example ('ryndale') is from southern Scotland in 1428¹⁰⁸; at the other geographical extreme, 'rendell' was in use in Orkney in 1519.¹⁰⁹ This rundale is clearly not appearing at a time of high population. The earlier example lies in the wake of the Black Death's devastation; it has been estimated for England that the population in 1400 was half

archaic feature of the 'clachan' is its ideal of cooperative land utilisation rather than its occupation of ancient sites" (Burtchaell, p.121).

¹⁰⁵Whelan, p.55.

¹⁰⁶ibid.

¹⁰⁷He comments on the efficiency of the rundale village in colonizing marginal land; "It also explains why they were so absent from good land, where such a system was unnecessary" (ibid, p.56).

¹⁰⁸Liber Sancte Marie de Melros. *Munimenta vetustoria Monasterii Cisterciensis de Melros*, 521; usage cited in Aitken and Stevenson, p.514.

¹⁰⁹Records of the Earldom of Orkney, 13; usage cited in ibid, p.285.

what it had been a century earlier. But does this Scots usage refer to the same system that was latterly reported in Ireland? Sources indicate that in Scotland both runrig and rundale referred to the same general form of joint occupation of land; with runrig, however, the holdings took the form of a series of rigs (ridges) interspersed with each other, while with rundale the interspersed parcels were larger. Thus runrig allotments were narrow, and rundale broad.¹¹⁰ Apparently it was usual practice to hold the croft land in runrig and the outfield in rundale,¹¹¹ but generally the fundamentals of the system appear identical to those witnessed in Ireland, and phenomena such as the rotation of strips (Young's 'changedale') on a lottery principle occurred even if they were not essential.¹¹² In the 19th century the terms appear to be used interchangeably by commentators on Ireland. Here it should be noted that the later appearance of the term there need not imply the introduction of agricultural technique; it might just as well imply simply the application of the word to long-standing practices. The earliest description which is generally acknowledged to be of rundale in an Irish context (even if the term itself does not appear) is Sir Henry Piers' description of the native peasants in Westmeath in 1682. Andrews, commenting on this passage, notes the apparent use of words derived from the Teutonic languages in the terminology of the system¹¹³, and this may well indicate syncretism. But there is also a hint of antiquity in the note on the peasants' appeal to the allegedly ancient "Bearded Owen's law" (named, according to the author, after a Brehon judge) in the event of a recalcitrant partner.¹¹⁴ We have no reason to believe that we are on poor land here; indeed Piers comments separately on rocky western countries "...where corn is not to be had in so great plenty..." and where "...their greatest fields are but little crofts...".¹¹⁵

It is clear that arable under such a system might look very much like open field practice in some parts of England, albeit perhaps of more fragmented character. Witness Arthur Young's that rundale was "...exactly like the common fields of England. It is a most pernicious custom, which gives all these farms the mischiefs of our open field system in England."¹¹⁶ And where we do not

¹¹⁰e.g. Session Papers, *Geddes vs. Nasmyth* (1 Nov.)4, Peebleshire, 1748: "The Lands of the middle Onstead do indeed ly interspersed through the whole Lands of Rachan, but the way of Run-dale, not Run-rig, having several Parcels, consisting of sundry Rigs, lying seperately by themselves"; cited in Grant and Murison, p.445.

¹¹¹Aitken and Stevenson, p.514.

¹¹²As Dodgshon has argued. And surely Young's choice of a different term bears him out here. Dodgshon, 1975, p.24-27.

¹¹³J.H. Andrews, 1974, p.6.

¹¹⁴Piers, p.119. Kenneth Nicholls informs me that 'Bearded Owen' (Eoghan na Feasoige) was the O Reilly ruler of East Breifne, 1401-2 and 1418-49, who drew up a code of laws which was generally observed in that territory until 1603.

¹¹⁵Piers, p.120-121.

¹¹⁶Young, i, p.150-1.

have an 18th century map showing rundale allotments¹¹⁷ he further obliges us with a sketch of an Irish cabin against a backdrop of balks.¹¹⁸ This lack of a visual cue is problematic, making it impossible to determine the status and ancestry of what is being described in many accounts. Is William Folkingham, in 1610, describing a pattern resulting from rundale allotment when he wrote "...though Irish soile be neither immoderately colde, stiffe nor barren, yet their tillage is generally eared in small Stitches..." (a stitch being defined here as a "small Ridge")? This could easily fit, but it is hardly enough when, evidently experiencing the same difficulties in explaining these ridges in functional terms as modern investigators, he had earlier noted that "...Stitches are common in Norfolke and Suffolke, euen in their light grounds, and in Hertfordshire where the Tilthes are rich...".¹¹⁹ Similar problems occur when we examine the increasing complaints regarding Irish husbandry; many of the points made could relate as easily to old English agricultural technique as to native tradition.¹²⁰

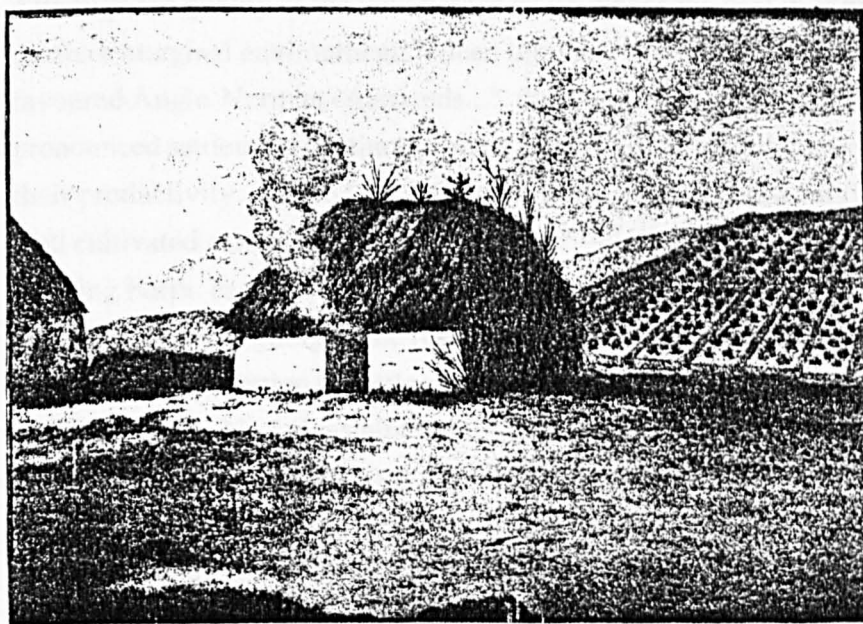
Looking for the occurrence of rundale on good land we turn first to McCourt's famous distributional mapping of clachans in 1832-40 based on the first edition O.S. maps. On this concentrations of clusters show up in certain fertile east coast locations, notably south-east Wexford, and Lecale and Ards in county Down.

¹¹⁷J.H. Andrews, 1986, p.242.

¹¹⁸Young, ii, frontspiece.

¹¹⁹Folkingham, p.48.

¹²⁰e.g. Cressey Dymock writing to Samuel Hartlib c.1658 - "I have observed in all places in *England* the great inconveniences that come by the Want of Enclosure, both to private and publique, the irregularity of these Lands that are enclosed, the frequent, and (as things now stand in relation to time past, and Land already set out) unremediable intanglements or intermixture of Interest of severall persons in the same Common, in the same Field, in the same Close, and sometimes in the same Acre." He goes on to speak of tortuous routeways. English husbandry, however, rises far above the Irish. (Hartlib, p.3-4).



AN IRISH CABBIN.

Facsimile of a sketch made by Arthur Young in 1776.

Arthur Young's report of his tour in Ireland gives us an immensely detailed picture of agricultural practice during the late 1770's. In it he comments on the existence of partnership farming which he found "...in Antrim, Londonderry, Fermanagh, in every county of Connacht, in parts of Cork, Kerry, and Tipperary, and also in Kilkenny, Wexford, and Wicklow; almost everywhere, in fact, except in the richest parts of the central lowland."¹²¹ According to Andrews, in Young's mind the relationship between the two ideas of partnership farming and rundale was "...evidently rather close."¹²² In July 1776, Young visited the baronies of Bargy and Forth, in County Wexford, on the south-eastern tip of Ireland. Although the quality of the land here is by no means the best in Wexford, it is by no means a marginal environment; indeed these are Whelan's "...environmentally favoured Anglo-Norman coastlands...", they are firmly in the tillage zone, areas of pronounced settlement continuity, and a plethora of historical commentaries testify to their productivity. In 1683 the barony of Forth under harvest was likened to "...a well cultivated garden with diversified plots"¹²³; ninety-three years later Young, entering Forth, casts his eye over the soil "...a reddish good loam without stones."¹²⁴ He is going to the residence of Colonel Nun at St. Margaret's, centred in the dense concentration of settlements in east Forth that McCourt marked as 'clachans' in his mapping. Nun gives him the following information: "barony of Forth and Bargie farms generally 20 to 80 acres¹²⁵; but many of them hired in partnership, and when the children marry are subdivided into smaller portions."¹²⁶ Is this 'rundale'? As far as Young is concerned the evidence suggests that it is. A month later, while at Shane's Castle in Antrim, he comments on the practice of the linen weavers of splitting their already small farms between their children. He goes on "There is a custom here called rundale, which is a division of their farms into spaces by balks, without fences, which they take here and there I believe that it prevails down in Wexford, etc., where I mentioned farms in partnership without sufficiently explaining this circumstance."¹²⁷ Young had in fact made no mention of partnership farming in Wexford outside of Bargy and Forth. The farmers of Bargy and Forth plough with

¹²¹J.H. Andrews, 1986, p.244.

¹²²ibid, p.242 (footnote).

¹²³Whelan, p.51-2.

¹²⁴Young, i, p.87.

¹²⁵He had previously been told that farms in Bargy are generally 40 to 100 acres.

¹²⁶Young, i, p.87.

¹²⁷ibid, p.151; The use of "believe" may suggest that Young didn't witness this himself. It is often difficult to determine what information he had from informants, and what he witnessed himself.

horses (4 in a team, although potatoes are commonly put in the "trenching way" - spade work on good land here?), their crops are good and varied (barley, beans, peas, potatoes, flax)¹²⁸, the "little farmers" are comfortable and content (with many worth several hundred pounds) and their standards of work, life, and dwelling are high. Young gives us details of a farm in Forth: "70 acres. 16 cows, 4 to each partner. 20 horses, 5 each. 80 sheep. 60 swine. Stock worth £300. Families 4." But the land on this farm, in 'classic' rundale fashion, had endured continuous cropping, apparently 90 crops of corn in succession without fallow, allowed by similarly 'classic' continuous manuring (here with seaweed and sand, the benefits of a coastal location which permitted uniquely intensive exploitation of land). Young had also noted continuous cropping in Bargo.¹²⁹ Sir William Brereton, travelling through Wexford in 1635, before any significant rise in population, voiced similar criticisms.¹³⁰ In Wexford in 1776, although far from its peak, population was rising fast, and household economies were being supplemented by the seasonal employment of their young men in Newfoundland from May to October.¹³¹

But in this most anglicized of Irish areas, this designation is surprising. Forth and Bargo were the first areas to be granted by Diarmid Mac Murchada to the Anglo-Normans and experienced close settlement and intensive sub-infeudation with unusually small manors.¹³² These baronies were the most tenacious of the Wexford colony, their boundary effectively representing the limits of the diminished Wexford Pale by the beginning of the 16th century. Jones Hughes has pointed out the exceptional presence of a density of both *baile* and *town* elements in placenames in these baronies, and suggested that this may betoken a truly ethnically mixed community in medieval times.¹³³ But the stress in commentaries continually is on the separateness of the colony and Jones Hughes himself registered the exceptionally high rate of townland names of English origin (50%) hinting at advanced and early anglicization.¹³⁴ Stanihurst, in the later 16th century,

¹²⁸A lack of reliance on the potato is indicated by the fact that Forth and Bargo was one of the few areas in the country whose population rose (37,756-38,036) over the famine decade (1841-51) arising from the potato blight (Roche, p.117).

¹²⁹"It was not long before I was in the barony of Bargo, and I was much surprised to see no great appearance of any thing better than common. In one respect, I remarked the vilest husbandry, which was exhausting the land by successive corn crops, and then leaving it to cover itself with weeds, and grass by degrees..."(i, p.86); such shifting cultivation is compatible with the notion of 'outfield' cultivation).

¹³⁰Of land in the Manor of Oulart he commented "...it seems to be a good-natured earth, but it hath been overtilled, and much wronged by Irish husbandry" (Brereton, p.390).

¹³¹Young, i, p.88.

¹³²Roche, p.107.

¹³³Jones Hughes, 1970, p.255. Later he commented that "In the coastlands of county Wexford we may be witnessing, in the place-names, surviving traces of two powerful cultures struggling for supremacy in threshold country" (1987, p.347).

¹³⁴Jones Hughes, 1987, p.346.

commended Wexford for, above all other places, remaining estranged from the Irishry, although his enthusiasm was tempered by the development, latterly, of what he claimed was an Irish-English pidgin tongue¹³⁵; Eachard, while hardly an informed source, makes a similar comment a century later.¹³⁶ Most however, like Sir Henry Wallop in 1581¹³⁷, attributed the strange language to fossilization rather than to combination, and travellers accounts, including Young's, invariably commented approvingly on the particular practices and appearance of the inhabitants of Forth and Bargy, a particularity taken to be racial. Everything points to stability and continuity of settlement in these baronies - they have an extremely high percentage of Old English names included in the 'Principal Irish Names' enumerated in the '1659 Census'¹³⁸, the Civil Survey of the mid-17th century indicates strong continuity in land ownership from the period of colonization¹³⁹, of the thirteen manorial villages which survive today in Wexford as settlements, six are in Forth and Bargy, and there was a retention of Old English patronymics in certain parishes here in the mid-19th century that was unrivalled elsewhere in Ireland.

From the mid-19th century Ordnance Survey and 'Griffith's Valuation' material Jones Hughes identified 17 distinctive farmstead clusters in Forth¹⁴⁰, some of which can be associated with Anglo-Norman settlement, either through tower-house or church sites. Churchtown, in Carne parish, whose land was held in common by three tenants in 1756¹⁴¹ and which contained the parish church, indeed qualifies as a manorial village.¹⁴² He goes on to both associate these settlements of Old English inspiration with the south Kilkenny farm villages and to dissociate them from traditional Gaelic practice. Now clearly Anglo-Norman origins are compatible with dispersed holdings of the sort that Burtchaell illustrates in the south Kilkenny village of Luffany in 1879¹⁴³ but what does seem strange is the manner in which holdings latterly appear in partnership form when, in a manorial context, one expects holdings that become individually fixed and quantified, which pass by primogeniture, and which appear, tenurially, as individual units.¹⁴⁴ Jones

¹³⁵ Stanihurst, p.11.

¹³⁶ Of the wild Irish he says "The English Tongue is very frequently used among 'em, and in some places (particularly in the county of Wexford) they make use of a mungrel sort of speech between English and Irish" (Eachard, p.16-17).

¹³⁷ Roche, p.114; Young himself found that "...not one in an hundred knows any thing of Irish..." (Young, p.89).

¹³⁸ Smyth, map, p.61.

¹³⁹ Roche, p.107; Colfer, p.74.

¹⁴⁰ Jones Hughes, 1987, p.347.

¹⁴¹ Whelan (ed), 1986-7, p.30.

¹⁴² Colfer, p.82, Fig. 3.8; Jones-Hughes, 1987, p.349.

¹⁴³ Burtchaell, p.117, fig. 6.2.

¹⁴⁴ Dodgshon points to the importance of shareholding in understanding the development of medieval English field systems (1980, p.35-40); and Thirsk argues that, in the English context, official manorial

Hughes notes that these clusters in Wexford tend to be the dominant, and sometimes only, settlement form within the townlands they occupy and that, in the mid-19th century, the land worked by the residents was rarely outwith the townland boundary.¹⁴⁵ Looking for an Anglo-Norman precedent for this kind of tenurial situation we might turn to the case of Colp in county Meath. Using this example Annagret Simms has argued that the tendency for a dispersed form of manorial settlement in Ireland, as opposed to the classic English manorial village, derives primarily from the assumption of the pre-existent townland framework in the composition of manors. Her tabulation of a manorial extent of 1408 shows 9 townlands affiliated to the manor; most are held by a single free tenant, but two (Stamene and Downaghkerny) are each held by two free tenants. In these latter cases only one figure for each townland is given for the acreage, the land under the plough, and the land that the tithe was payable on, the tithes being the only dues for which the tenants were liable.¹⁴⁶ This looks very much like a partnership - the tenants were not individually responsible, a single sum instead being paid out of the townland. In such cases the 'partners', who were here of English/Welsh origin, would have to agree on land organization and arable sequencing and it is not unlikely, given Anglo-Norman agricultural tradition and the requirement for payment of a common fee, that an intermixture of arable holdings would have emerged.¹⁴⁷ Certainly if we accept this tenure as provoking a shareholding structure within the townland (which is debatable) we may want to concur with Dodgshon's argument that intermixture of land parcels would almost inevitably occur with the attempt to equalize the quality of each holding across the varying soil conditions of the townland.¹⁴⁸ Customs of inheritance (primogeniture) would have militated against the excessive fragmentation of holdings and ensured the maintenance of small partnerships self-regulated within their townland base. Are we seeing the results of a process like this in Wexford? And are its clusters of the same order as the towerhouse-cluster "Irish Townes" in mid and east Limerick noted in abundance by the Civil Survey.¹⁴⁹ Certainly in Ards, where, as noted below, similar morphological characteristics appear, there is evidence of joint-tenure on the Portaferry estate in 1641.¹⁵⁰ Or alternatively do we see the Wexford partnerships emerging after 1641 facilitated by the cognitive prominence of the townland as a tenurial unit?

policy belied the persistence of partible inheritance (p.13). Burtchaell tells us that the inhabitants of the South Kilkenny villages were designated 'partners' in the 18th and earlier 19th centuries (p.116).

¹⁴⁵Jones Hughes, 1987, p.349.

¹⁴⁶Simms, p.308.

¹⁴⁷It should be noted that the Down Survey map (1655-6) indicates that the townlands in question had split by this date which may hint that the holdings were indeed consolidated from the outset.

¹⁴⁸Dodgshon, 1975, p.28-29; 1980, p.46-52.

¹⁴⁹Smyth, p.67.

¹⁵⁰Rental of the Portaferry Estate, 1641.

Young, of course, commented on the Wexford partners splitting their farms among the children. But it is difficult to reconcile this with the evidence of 84 years later when the partnerships and clusters remained small; the variety of names, furthermore, within some of the clusters gives an impression of a grouping of unrelated tenantry rather than of kin.¹⁵¹ The extent to which these practices may be syncretic is difficult to determine. The assumption of the townland unit immediately marks a syncretism that has tenurial and organizational implications, but the extent to which practice within the townland unit was influenced by native method is undecidable.¹⁵²

In parallel with this, we must bear in mind Jones-Hughes' demonstration of farm clusters with a seemingly rundale layout and of apparently Gaelic inspiration and habitation in favourable areas elsewhere in Wexford. And here, interestingly, we find Old English patronymics occurring among the holders of scattered parcels.¹⁵³

As for Ards and Lecale, both areas in the highest bracket of land valuation in the mid-19th century, Young's report gives no hint of rundale there. In Upper Ards, where the clusters on the peninsula are concentrated, the morphological characteristics recall the situation in Wexford. Here, once again, we have a network of clusters apparently related to the townland structure. In maps of the Savage estate in 1799 they show up as groupings of seemingly hipped-roofed houses with central chimneys sitting on bounded village sites marked "commons".¹⁵⁴ Around 1850 the townlands in Upper Ards show up as having a relatively high occurrence of holdings in scattered parcels. Again we are in an Anglo-Norman area, though of different flavour. The powerful Anglo-Norman Savage family had become established here after entering Ulster with De Courcy and, despite the progressive contraction of their own lands, had retained seneschalship for the dwindling Earldom

¹⁵¹Jones Hughes gives the Old English names of Furlong, Hayes, Codd, Harpur, and Corish for five of the six families in the cluster of Ring in Carn parish; 1987, p.349.

¹⁵²What do we make of the "partition" of Netherstown amongst its four tenants, shortly before 1814, who "...formerly held it in common." Is this simply the consolidation of holdings which, despite the small size of the partnership group, were excessively fragmented or is there the sense of a lack of fixity of the partners holdings on the ground? The partition is clearly not just a tenurial change which might leave the actual condition of holdings on the ground unchanged for it was taken to have improved tillage (Whelan (ed), 1986-7, p.28). In cases of joint-tenure there is always the possibility that the land may have been farmed co-operatively by the partners as a single unit. Dodgshon argues that this is more likely than not and Leister found examples in north Tipperary. But McCourt's researches show that this seems to have been highly unusual, and, as we have seen, Young's testimony unequivocally unites partnership and sub-division (Dodgshon, 1975, p.17; McCourt, 1978, p.201).

¹⁵³Jones Hughes, 1987, p.350-1.

¹⁵⁴O'Hare.

of Ulster. Apparently increasingly gaelicized, they practised tanistry and other Irish customs, and at the beginning of the 17th century, the point when Patrick Savage's brother-in-law, Sir James Montgomery, reorganized the Portaferry estate, farmed in openfields and lorded over "...freeholders and followers (who were mostly degenerate old English or meer Irish)...".¹⁵⁵ Particularly notable is their retention of their lands in the Upper Ards from their 12th century acquisition through the turmoils of the 16th and 17th centuries and into the late modern period. A paper that has been published on the townland of Craigarodden has argued a case for the medieval origin of, and the rundale organization of the lands around, the cluster of Craigarodden Upper.¹⁵⁶ The first point is intriguing but tenuous and rests on the clusters' association with what may be a medieval routeway, and the supposed antiquity of its field formation. According to the Census of 1659, however, we find no "Irish" (that is, native Irish or Old English) inhabiting the townland at that date, a situation rare in the Upper Ards and unique in the parish of Ballytristan.¹⁵⁷ Now according to William Montgomery's account, Sir James' activities on the Savage estate from 1623 seem to have confirmed most "Irish" occupants on their lands in the estate, albeit with certain reforms and more profitable leases, and he stresses that it was on the waste lands that Sir James established British planters.¹⁵⁸ That Craigarodden was under his jurisdiction is borne out in Charles I's confirmatory grants of Portaferry Manor to Patrick Savage.¹⁵⁹ This makes it unlikely that the form which settlement in Craigarodden presents in the O.S. material has a pre-17th century date, a conclusion which may be supported by its toponymy which contains no 'settlement' element.¹⁶⁰ The names of the occupants in the 19th century valuation records tend to confirm the ethnicity (unsurprisingly Scots) given in the Census. Which leaves the question of the land and its jointly leased (at that date) arable strips, and individually leased intermixed arable strips and land parcels. Are we here looking at an inscription of rundale of Scots instigation?

For our purposes Lecale can be dealt with swiftly by turning to Buchanan's study of the barony. Anglo-Norman settlement here was essentially peripheral, the main central zone remaining in ecclesiastic hands until the

¹⁵⁵Montgomery, p.3-4. The writer goes on to commend the reform in the ways of the Savages. Now "...they are as much civilized as the British ... and enjoy good houses, orchards and enclosed fields (which they improve)..." (p.8-9). The old freeholders were reluctant to alter their holdings from "...their old way" (p.4).

¹⁵⁶Oram and Robinson.

¹⁵⁷Pender (ed), p.92.

¹⁵⁸Montgomery, p.4-5.

¹⁵⁹Armstrong, p. 368-373.

¹⁶⁰Given that townland names were thought to be fixed in the medieval period. The name probably signifies 'rock of the red area', although the townland seems to have had the alternative anglicized title of 'Tollencreeny'. It makes its first documentary appearance in 1627; Hughes and Hannan, p.46.

dissolution of the 16th century. On the church estates Buchanan felt that native Irish settlement must have remained relatively unaffected by the Anglo-Norman settlement¹⁶¹ although the effect of the modernizing influence of the monastic orders on agricultural technique within their estates is difficult to quantify. The bulk of these lands was constituted as the Manor of Down in 1641, and it is from documents relating to this that Buchanan draws. With the proviso that we accept the coincidence of joint leases and Irish patronymics (a caveat encouraged by our Wexford experience) as generally signalling rundale formation then we have no difficulty in finding rundale, albeit apparently in retreat, in favoured locations in this area of rich agricultural land at the beginning of the 18th century. Using a map of the manor from 1710, and a view book of tithes from 1732, Buchanan was able to identify clustered settlement with partnership farming.¹⁶² There were, however, occasional hints of a different pattern of landholding on the ground with only dispersed settlement appearing in some townlands held entirely in partnership¹⁶³, the former a phenomenon normally taken to indicate consolidated holdings. Population on the manor was hardly pressing remaining approximately the same in 1710 as it was in 1659.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Buchanan, 1958, p.38.

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p.111.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, p.112.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.115.

f. The problem of definition

The difficulty for us here is precisely the assumption that rundale is present in a situation of joint tenure held by Gaelic tenantry; this amounts to nothing less than the presupposition of the existence of rundale at a particular historic point in order to demonstrate that very existence. There are surely good reasons to believe that something we could accept as rundale appeared in this situation, but ultimately no more is demonstrated than the fact that tenurial conditions matched those elsewhere from which rundale emerged. And this, given Whelan's emphasis not on tenure but on land resources and population growth, may not be enough to deflect his argument. What is clear, in the fug, is that the whole debate is bedevilled by semantic problems, and that this has serious consequences for efforts to establish the antiquity of the clachan form. For what exactly is rundale, what is its identifying mark? And what is a clachan, how do we recognize one when we see it? This can only be done through the apprehension of certain traits which are accepted as signalling it. For McCourt the two most significant indices are clustering and the existence of rundale.¹⁶⁵ While arriving at common agreement as to what constitutes clustering can be, as noted above, problematic, and the definition of a clachan by the existence of rundale (and rundale by the existence of a clachan) potentially tautological, the formulation may be operationally useful provided a satisfactory definition of rundale can be achieved. But even so there is clearly a problem in cases where agricultural practice cannot be ascertained. Such a situation typically arises when working from maps; and this is ominous, in particular, for McCourt's famous distributional mapping of clachans in 1832-40 based on the first edition 6" O.S. maps. All the sites which he marked may have looked like clachans¹⁶⁶ but in the vast majority of examples which he marked he could not have been assured that rundale was being, or had been, practised; the possibility exists that the various clusters he marked were of diverse origin and operation. One need not look far for 'clachanish' clusters other than those of Anglo-Norman inspiration. Thus at the time of the O.S. mapping we have cottier settlements at the edges of 'strong' farms, and settlements of labourers at road side, sea edge, or on common or waste land.¹⁶⁷ Young, describing how the poorer occupying tenantry managed to hire a farm gave an alternative to

¹⁶⁵ McCourt, 1950, p.163.

¹⁶⁶ He did note a degree of formality in the eastern clusters occurring on lands colonized by the Anglo-Normans that he found missing elsewhere. Although clearly willing to accept these as clachans he writes: "That some acculturation took place, however, is suggested by the prevalence in these localities of courtyard farm-types and their grouping around a central place or road crossing with a hint of formality that is in contrast to the amorphous nature of the Irish clachan " (McCourt, 1971, p.144).

¹⁶⁷ e.g. Jones Hughes, 1958, p.237; 1987, p.364.

partnership. The farm would be taken individually, but cottiers and labourers taken on with portions of land assigned to them. As the house of the leaseholder would be of a grandeur to match his cottiers the result might be a passable 'clachan'.¹⁶⁸

This obviously has consequences for, and really presents intractable difficulties to, the search for the antiquity of the clachan form. If, for example, archaeology unearths a Neolithic house cluster for us, by what right do we connect it with the modern clachan, locating it in the same settlement tradition? What would allow us to consider it, in Proudfoot's phrase, a 'proto-clachan'? The answer is the underlying assumption inherent in the search for a *unitary origin*, namely the very existence of that point. But with such a ubiquitous phenomenon as collective dwelling it is clear that similar manifestations may occur at different historic points (perhaps across a wide chronological gap) under different conditions without any trace of causality in the space between the earlier and the later.¹⁶⁹ The argument that the clustered settlement is, in some essential way, the same across time is contingent upon the possibility of demonstrating the continuity of memory and the transmission of cultural practices. But lack of evidence makes this impossible and the material simplicity of the clusters makes them deficient in the sort of expressive characteristics (e.g. decorative elements) which allow the tracing of influence and precedent greater authority. A search for origins which assumes cultural memory as already evident in the observed form and sets out to recapture the object of that memory travels back through history defining the phenomena that it meets in terms of their assumed *telos*, the starting point of the search. The apprehension of the archaic house cluster as a 'clachan' rests then, in these austere terms, on an analogy; the ideal of the 'genetic continuity' is grounded only on an analogy. In his paper of 1989, which expressly set out to "...avoid all analogical modes of inference..."¹⁷⁰, Dr Andrews identified a considerable number of what he was quite prepared to call 'clachans' on 16th and early 17th century maps. But in doing this he accepted the generalization of the definition of the clachan to a "...non-nucleated rural house

¹⁶⁸Young, ii, p.31-2, 49.

¹⁶⁹Claude Lévi-Strauss, with a structuralist's sensitivity to dispersion and difference, warns us of the dangers of adopting an analogy with biology in the study of human societies. Human artifacts cannot be considered as species which have their own genetic code. In biology it is precisely the genetic heritage which guarantees the authenticity of the unity of a species; so we can study the transformations across time in the horse, while remaining assured of the connection between the various manifestations. We are assured of no such essential similarity with axes, or house clusters. The house cluster is no species whose manifestations are necessarily interconnected (Lévi-Strauss, p.4).

¹⁷⁰ J.H. Andrews, 1989, p.1.

cluster...".¹⁷¹ Analogy may have been avoided, but it is at the expense of changing the meaning of the term and hence of dispensing with the guiding question here.

The situation that we are presented with is, I feel, this. Firstly it seems to me likely that Dr. Whelan is both wrong and right. The early evidence from Scotland of what is taken to be a near identical system, its geographically widespread occurrence and appearance on fertile soils, indicate that its essentials are not prompted by conditions matching the ones in Ireland which Whelan sees as fuelling the development of rundale. It is enough here to note this; one does not have to posit the introduction of runrig or rundale to Ireland from Scotland. There is no reason why the spade or potato should be unified with the conception of rundale. Sir Henry Piers' ploughmen were not potato-men and Arthur Young testifies to ploughing with explicitly stated rundale.¹⁷² "Co-operative management, agreed land use and a joint labour system for certain tasks..." hardly presuppose the peculiar conditions of pre-famine peasant Ireland. How can one argue that these are a "sophisticated ecological adjustment" to 18th and 19th century conditions in western Ireland when they are so well attested for completely different situations elsewhere? Do we not expect these characteristics in all situations of 'joint-tenure' (such as in fertile Forth), and perhaps in a good deal of situations where holding is in severalty too (as in runrig, as Dodgshon analyses it)? The notion that outfield cultivation is only possible, due to massive labour requirements, in a period of high population growth is debatable, especially in the light of Scots evidence. It may be that outfield developed due to population pressure on the infield resources; such an account presupposes rotation and ley or fallow as a continuously cropped infield, however well manured, is ultimately unsustainable and hence implies shifting cultivation. McCourt's researches invert Whelan's point finding that true infield usage occurred only in "exceptional circumstances" enabled by a fertilizing agent (usually of marine origin) and driven by population pressure.¹⁷³ Nicholls sees shifting cultivation in late medieval Ireland as prompted precisely by low population and Thirsk related infield-outfield systems in general (as opposed to two or three field systems) to pastoral, and therefore relatively lowly populated, societies.¹⁷⁴ Finally it may be salutary, when confronted with the statement that the system is "...a sophisticated solution to specific ecological, environmental and social problems...", to bear in mind the seemingly extreme agricultural dysfunctionality of rundale under 18th and 19th

¹⁷¹*ibid*, p.9; that is, one without "...an element other than an ordinary dwelling house..." (p.6). On these terms, one could say that the Neolithic settlement at Lough Gur is a clachan, an identification which Andrews had already argued against (1974, p.3).

¹⁷²e.g. Young at Strokestown (i, p.217).

¹⁷³McCourt, 1971, p.130.

¹⁷⁴Nicholls, 1976, p.9; Thirsk, p.23.

century conditions exactly, in fact, the conditions for which it was, supposedly, designed!

On the other hand, one might say that he is correct inasmuch as the unity that he describes may emerge only at this point. The high population levels based on the potato staple, and that crop's peculiar ability to nourish on minimal patches of increasingly high and marginal land, leads, in the absence of other employment, to the increasing fragmentation of holdings. On these reduced patches and often rocky soils the plough could often simply not be operated¹⁷⁵; besides the use of the spade could increase yields by 50%.¹⁷⁶ The 'lazy-bed' pattern of troughs and raised beds seems to have been uniquely suited to the potato.

My argument is, then, that Whelan has given us an extended definition of rundale. But what should we consider as its identifying mark? For Young it was clearly the scattering of individual holdings through the arable, albeit if thereby subject to further elaborations. Modern research has found the simplicity of Young's observation wanting and has developed more detailed and explicit formulations based on field work and documentary research. The tendency has then been to generalize these. But one wonders how helpful this has been as it has tended to accordingly obliterate cognizance of the finely detailed variations collected. A confusion results and, my feeling is, the sort of case that Whelan makes emerges. Certainly the impression that one gets from the detailed literature is of a highly flexible orientation to land and resource use with all manner of regional variations, presences, and absences. Despite its other aspects McCourt's tendency was to see the most characteristic feature of rundale as the interspersed arable plots.¹⁷⁷ To be sure a great number of other resources were exploited but they seem to have generally been made available through the same structure of shares that underpinned the arable holdings. Evidently we are rather close here to Dodgshon's analysis of the basis of runrig as shareholding, a conception which he argues would result in an intermixed arable pattern through the attempt to equalize the share units. In our context one can see how a shareholding structure is likely to emerge from partnership and/or partible inheritance and even how, given shifts in scale, consolidated holdings might result (the *rath*?). Such a conception, I feel, acts against the unhelpful tendency to see a monolithic system, as if legislated from above, and sensitizes us to possible historic and regional variations, adjustments, developments,

¹⁷⁵As, for instance, McCourt found at Corick (1950, p.34) where the plough could not be used in the lower fields due to the narrowness of the strips.

¹⁷⁶Andrews, 1986, p.242.

¹⁷⁷McCourt, 1950, p.26.

and syncretisms. There is no shortage of evidence for shareholding in Gaelic Ireland and it may be that modern partnership tenures, which may have still been evolving in Young's time, effectively replicated the sort of situation that Nicholls encourages us to see, through analogy with Scotland, in late medieval Gaelic Ireland. The practical efficacy for the tenants to hold in partnership is clear; but why, if there was no predisposition, should they farm their common holding in rundale fashion as opposed to in one unit?

Furthermore, by dispensing with the fixation on a unitary origin we allow that phenomena can reappear. Thus lazy beds are not necessarily the inheritance of prehistoric cultivation techniques, they might simply be a response to the potato and thin soil. Likewise a tradition of continuous cropping need not date back to the Bronze Age, it may emerge, in some areas at least, under the exigencies of landlordism and modern population pressure. Shifting cultivation might not be Neolithic, but appear, in regional variations, with insecurity of tenure and population flux.

Nothing of course is here proved, except, I hope, that the logic which tries to limit the chronology of the clachan and rundale in the way which Whelan's does is faulty. That there were clusters in Gaelic Ireland hardly needs debating; Andrews and Duffy both supply convincing cartographic evidence. But that is hardly the point. Whether or not we want to call them, as well as those of apparently more mixed heritage, "clachans" is another matter; their status will depend on how the term 'rundale' is construed, and is likely to be, quite simply, undecidable.

Chapter 2. Democracy Overgrown and Nature Affronted: the Perception of the Irish House Cluster.

a. *Introduction - travel and Ireland*

Using the available literary materials it should be quite possible to construct the skeleton of a history of seeing the Irish house clusters. But in its immediate and enabling recourse to written material, whether manuscript or printed, this history would, like all others, be exclusive. For at the outset we would presuppose the view of a certain kind of observer, one mobilizing the economic resources permitting seeing and writing, one of learning, means, social connection, but most of all one who addresses a distant, unseeing audience. The distance gives the descriptive endeavour, whose paradigmatic agent is the traveller who reports and who hence has always the nature of an emissary, its purpose and rationale. While the sense of distance may be maintained, in a complex manner, through the reader's experience in the text of the persona of the traveller, the presumption of the text is at the same time, in its address to a readership who will understand its determinations, assessments, judgements, and opinions, to collapse that distance. And with the establishment of the chorological survey that presumption becomes absolute¹; its intention is not only to evacuate the spacing between reader and author, but also between author and object. The author, as it were, shifts from traveller to postman.² This ideology of the collapse of alterity will be a key co-ordinate in the development of the present argument. Such a history, then, would maintain a sensitivity to the connection between author and addressee, it would deal with the shifting interpretations of the clusters, with what their characteristics were taken to be, with the way they emerged in discourse, with their meaning, and with what they were taken to embody. A number of the most important descriptions appear in what might broadly be called travel literature, or at least the literature of travellers, and like all productions of this genre, names or otherwise, they are founding documents establishing through metaphor a landscape immediately imbued with meaning. I will argue that in these documents we can perceive a tension between

¹The conviction that the information collected is 'true' assures scientific status and leads to the possibility of mobilizing that information in the name of rational forms of government. So William Shaw Mason, elucidating his project, the aim of which is to inform "... that most important of all sciences ... political or statistical philosophy" quotes from his mentor Sir John Sinclair: "No science can furnish to any mind capable of receiving useful information, so much real entertainment; none can yield such important hints for the improvement of agriculture, for the extension of commercial industry, for regulating the conduct of individuals, or for extending the prosperity of the state; none can tend so much to promote the general happiness of the species" (Mason, p.xii).

²I am thinking here of the distinction drawn by Paul Carter between the naming practices of Cook and Banks, the botanist, in Australia. The sea- captain Cook is characterized as the traveller, ironic, in motion, embracing subjectivism and metaphor and free of the imperializing claims of objectivity. The botanist Banks is static, erecting through classification a monolithic scientific discourse of fictitious authenticity whose claim over its objects is absolute; Carter, p.18-31.

the lure of the anti-classical, and an apprehension of the particular political implications of that.

Opening an essay on mid-nineteenth century Ireland, T.W. Freeman commented that "If printer's ink could have solved the problems of Ireland it would have become an earthly paradise long ago. Not only Irishmen but residents and visitors of widely varied origin were impelled to write about it, to travel widely, to note down what they saw, and even to moralise on the ways of life that would lead to improvements."³ And indeed from the later 18th century on, the Irish landscape was traversed by an increasing number of travellers whose observations gave rise to an accumulating volume of descriptive literature. There was a progressive shift in the composition of those passing along the roads as antiquarians, agriculturalists, Grand Tour refugees, and others moving with an explicit aesthetic agenda gave way to royal commissioners, newspaper correspondents, researchers of various hues, and inveterate travellers, generally 'progressive' and politicized commentators who discoursed robustly on England's relationship with Ireland, on social and economic conditions, and who offered varied analyses and nostrums for moral and economic redemption. Lord George Hill's publication of 1846 "Facts from Gweedore: with Useful Hints to Donegal Tourists" neatly symbolizes the linkage between travel and reform. The 'facts' preceding the 'hints' were an advertisement of Hill's improvements to his Donegal estate, (one of which was the establishment of a hotel), publicity which provoked philanthropic contributions and which brought, among others coming to inspect the good work, Thomas Carlyle to his door in 1849.⁴

It was during the relatively peaceful years from 1713 to 1739, after the upheavals at home and abroad of the seventeenth century, that extended and edifying travel in Europe, and in particular France and Italy, became established in England as an aristocratic fashion.⁵ Nor did subsequent war, although inconvenient, deter the travellers spurred on by an increasing interest in classical antiquity after the rediscovery of Pompeii in 1748. The patron class facilitated travel for their artists, notably through the Dilettanti Society founded in 1734, to the extent that Hogarth and Gainsborough, two of the most notable artists of the era, found themselves virtually exceptions in not having studied abroad in their youth.⁶ It was

³Freeman, p.242.

⁴Evans, 1981, p.89-91; Carlyle, p.230. Of the 'Gweedore inn' he wrote "... two storied white *human* house with offices in square behind this is the only *quite* civilized-looking thing ..." (p.241).

⁵Williams, p.403; Hussey, p.12.

⁶Williams, p.404.

inevitable that an age which applauded connoisseurship of the phenomenal landscape, viewed by eyes educated by continental landscape painting, should foster exploratory 'internal' forays, both physical and cognitive, into the nether regions of the British Isles. Scotland was one such location. The 63 year old Samuel Johnson who travelled with Boswell to the Hebrides in 1773 shared Hogarth and Gainsborough's distinction. He alone of his circle of distinguished friends had not made a Grand Tour. This arduous journey into the post-Jacobite Highland landscape has recently been described as an inverted tour, a counter-cultural gesture. This is likely true, but it is also an undertaking in accord with the culture of the time and, however apparent Johnson's interest in Highland social conditions, its aesthetic sensibilities. "The emphasis in Johnson's Journey is on discomfort, the unfamiliar, the unclassical, the marginal, the linguistic environment, too, like the actual landscape, being, as it were, original. Of course, what is remarkable about it at all is that it was an internalizing probe into an undisclosed, misrepresented, misunderstood and easily dismissed region of the North - West European Archipelago ...".⁷ Johnson's journey may have felt like a disclosure, but by 1806 Richard Colt Hoare considered Wales and Scotland which had "...for many successive years attracted the notice and admiration of the man of taste, and of the artist...", relatively familiar compared to Ireland.⁸ In the imagination, at least, this internal exploration continued in a slow and fitful manner. In 1824 the Irish-born Thomas Crofton Croker thought Ireland generally a *terra incognita* to the English.⁹ Undoubtedly, as one who was disclosing it such a claim was in his interests; but ten years later, Henry Inglis, an urbane Scot, whose account of Ireland was believed authoritative¹⁰, wrote of an absentee landlord, Mr. Lane Fox, of much-frequented Waterford who "Supposing the county of Waterford, and the tastes and wants of its people to resemble those of New Zealand or California, the good hearted, but mistaken landlord, visited his estates with pockets full of beads, little mirrors, brooches, and other gew-gaws of a like kind."¹¹ His own itinerary was spiced by his sighting of the Shannon and his "...belief that, to my countrymen, that part of Ireland lying to the west of the Shannon is a *terra incognita*."¹² The river bounded a shadowy landscape in which it was believed the most concentrated vestiges of Celtic Ireland were contained. In 1845 T.C Foster, reporting for *The Times*, revealed that the shadow had dissipated but barbarity was confirmed. The journey across Ireland seemed like one across time; going east one moved "...towards

⁷Dunn, p.4.

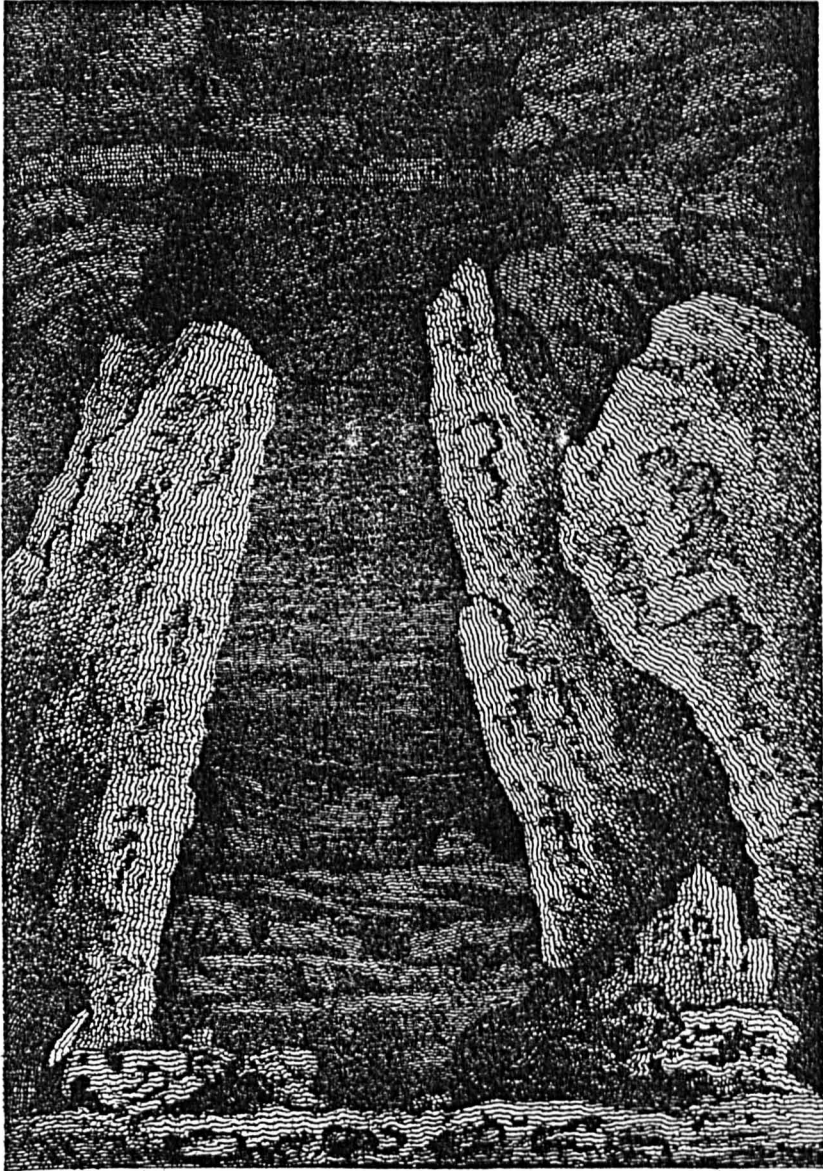
⁸ "...whilst the press has so teemed with publications, pointing out their natural beauties, and works of military and monastick art, that little more is left to be described..." (Hoare, p.0-i).

⁹Croker, p.1.

¹⁰It was quoted during Parliamentary debates on Ireland in the session of 1835; Allibon, p.932.

¹¹Inglis, vol.i, p.63-4.

¹²ibid, p.265.



SUBTERRANEAN TEMPLE IN THE
COUNTY OF MENTIL.

Published May 1807 by J. Hoare, 10, Pall Mall.

The 'Antiquarian Sublime' - Frontspiece to Hoare's Tour in Ireland (1807).

civilization." And, excepting Limerick and Cork, "...it is a general fact that the further you get westward, among the pure Irish, the more barbarous, uncivilized, and helpless are the people, the more uncultivated and waste the country...".¹³

Those in search of sublime effects of nature had found much in Ireland, a country notoriously undomesticated, to satisfy their tastes and a pattern of fashionable tourist spots emerged as accounts of visits were published and as word got around. As is evident from the frontspiece¹⁴, the author of the early travel guide *The Compleat Irish Traveller* (1788), whose own visit had expressly been made as an alternative to a European Grand Tour¹⁵, considered that Irish tourism was here to stay. Perhaps sobered by witnessing the fate of an earlier visitor who had published and whose visage now appeared with "...mouth and eyes wide open to receive the libation..." on the bottom of Dublin chamber pots¹⁶, he heartily commended urbane and picturesque Ireland. He presented the travelling aesthete with an Ireland of tableaux, antiquarian, urban, and picturesque, and although he detected social injustice it appeared most notably when its consequences disfigured a scene. His description of the "Glyn of the mountains", close to Powerscourt, is a pure epiphany of the sublime. The visitor here is presented with a prospect "...of the most horrible impending precipices, that from their terrifying height, and broken ruins at the bottom, appear to threaten him with destruction. - There is something really inexpressibly striking in this scene, even at first entrance. I never rode through a valley where there was such a mixture of beauty, of grandeur, of sublimity, if you will allow me the use of the expression here, and of something really awful, as is exhibited in this most enormous Glyn of the mountains."¹⁷ But it is later, with the calm assessment of the vista at Kilkenny, that we find the most explicit compression of a landscape interpreted in terms of visual pleasure: "The sides of the river are well planted, and the subjacent town looks as if it had been built merely to be looked at: for everything is worth seeing, bears upon the castle, whilst every thing dissightly is, some-how or other, screened from the view. The horizon is closed, in one limb, by mountains, placed at a due distance, to give variety without horror ...".¹⁸

¹³T.C. Foster, p.464.

¹⁴Entitled "The Proprietors of the Irish Traveller presenting a Copy of that WORK into the hand of Futurity to be preserved from the devastation of Time."

¹⁵(Luckombe), vol.1, p.31.

¹⁶Mr. Twiss; *ibid*, p.49.

¹⁷*ibid*, p.63-64.

¹⁸*ibid*, p.116.



The Proprietors of the Irish Traveller presenting
a Copy of that WORK into the hand of
Futurity to be preserved from the devastation of Time.

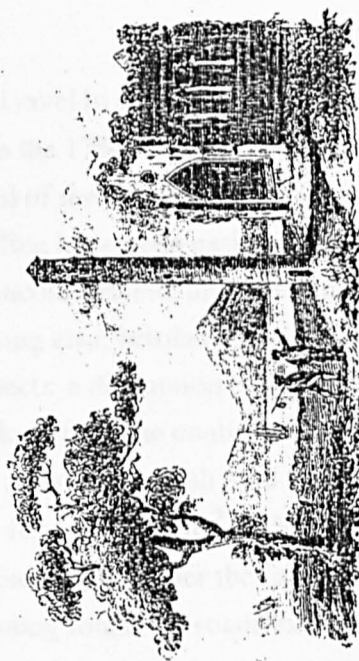
"Into the hand of Futurity" - Frontispiece to The Compleat Irish Traveller

THE COMPLEAT Irish Traveller; containing

A general Description of the most. Voted
(Cities, Towns, Seats, Buildings, Loughs &c.

— IN THE — KINGDOM of IRELAND, Interpersed with Observations on the Manners, Customs, Antiquities, Fossils and Natural History of that Country. VOL. I.

Illustrated with Elegant Copper Plates.



L O N D O N,
Printed for the Proprietors and Sold by
the Booksellers Price 14s. Bound.
1788.

b. The Ireland visited

Travel in the 18th century was facilitated by rapidly improving communications. In the 1760s the journey from London to Glasgow took 10 or 12 days; by the end of the century it had been reduced to 62 hours.¹⁹ Journey by boat may have often have been easier and faster than by land, but before steam transport it was still uncomfortable, unpredictable, and difficult; and it could be terrifying. It also, like nothing else, betokened the passage between alterior conditions. And here one suspects a distinction between the passage to Ireland and the journeys, however awkward, to the contiguous land masses of Scotland and Wales.²⁰ Once one had arrived, the Irish road system could seem surprisingly good, if not the provision for travelling it.²¹ The system had developed in two phases, in the 1730s and '60s, the former under the turnpike system, the latter financed by county cess.²² Arthur Young found the roads exemplary, but his response may have been coloured by his enthusiasm for the private enterprise which drove the presentment system under which the roads had latterly been created. Taylor and Skinner's contemporaneous *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* (1778) showed a distinct thinning of the network toward the west, with only Donegal shown as having a coast road fit for wheeled vehicles.²³ The year 1815 saw the beginnings of frequent, reliable, and wide-ranging public coach transport in Ireland when Charles Bianconi opened his first service from Clonmel to Cahir. By 1840 the country was well covered; navigation on canals and rivers and Bianconi's coaches, together with those of other firms, ensured that only some western areas and Inishowen in Donegal were more than 10 miles from public transport.²⁴

The 18th century traveller passed through a notoriously unquiet landscape. Various tensions erupted at various points throughout the 1700's in popular civil disturbance and agrarian outrage carried out by members of rural secret societies. In the earlier years Jacobitism might supply the epicentre, but the focus of the movements of the 1760's seem to have been primarily economic - taxes for road building, the hated tithe whose arrangement placed the weight of church support on the poor, conacre rents, enclosure, and all. Localized movements

¹⁹Hobsbawm, p.21.

²⁰Hadfield and McVeagh, p.134.

²¹Hoare recommended bringing one's own horses and carriage; p.xix.

²²Cullen, p.184; Andrews, 1986, p.254-5; Freeman, p.256.

²³Andrews, 1986, p.255; Taylor and Skinner. *The Post Chaise Companion*, a topographical guide book, developed from the map-making enterprise. It went through several editions from 1784. (Andrews, Introduction to Taylor and Skinner, p.xiv).

²⁴Freeman, p.257.

continued to spring up in the 1770s and 1780s.²⁵ Particularly for those without land, in a context of rising population, the economic situation was becoming intractable. Following France's spectacular close to the 1780s and the lack of support in the House of Commons, in the face of political radicalism in Ireland and the French threat, for reforms proposed by the Whigs, the simmering dissatisfactions and dissenting republican aspirations coalesced in the widespread and violent insurgency of 1798 during which the French, fulfilling a dual symbolic role of anti-deist Enlightenment republicans and Catholic deliverers, temporarily gained Irish soil. McDowell comments that "So far as British politicians and public opinion were concerned the events of 1798 brought home with terrifying force the truism that Ireland was the Achilles' heel of the empire. Was there any other country, Canning asked, '...whose state of society is more adapted to receive and cherish and mature the principles of the French revolution - principles which go to array the ... lower orders of the people against the educated and governing parts of the community, to arm poverty against property, labour against privilege, and each class of life against its superior?'"²⁶ Thus a tone was set for those turn-of-the-century travellers to a country with which they shared, after 1801, a parliament and to which the tourist's attention was diverted by necessity with Napoleon's closing of Europe. At least one author known to travellers had come to grief in the late '90s.²⁷ John Carr, travelling to Ireland in 1805, had to endure the astonishment of an acquaintance: "'What can possess you to go to Ireland?' exclaimed a friend of mine, 'where the hedges are lined with pikes and blunderbusses? Is it to contemplate famines and bogs, and bog-trotters, salmon leaps, and restless spirits, so barbarously ignorant...'"²⁸ The union was a preconceived and expedient response to the issues at hand; it provided increased military security, avoided the governmental difficulties of dealing with an Irish parliament, and diluted catholicism within the larger united political body thereby creating a condition in which emancipation could be countenanced without untoward political repercussion. For the first fifty years, while the travellers traced their paths, historical echoes were being raised in the advocacy of classical models of colonization as blueprints whereby Britannia's social and economic order might be impressed upon her sister.²⁹

²⁵R.F. Foster, 1989, p.222-225.

²⁶McDowell, 'Age of the United Irishmen', p. 362.

²⁷Hoare, reviewing useful literature for the traveller in Ireland writes: "The list of Tours also is very scanty, and very imperfect, if I except the excellent Letters on the Coast of Antrim, by the unfortunate Mr. HAMILTON, who fell a sacrifice to the fury of the rebels, during the disturbances in 1797" (Hoare, p.xiv).

²⁸Carr, p.2.

²⁹MacDonagh, p.liii.

The Ireland which awaited the traveller was one of an expanding population predicated upon an insecure economic structure that was moving toward crisis by the early 1800s in the absence of an industrialization adequate to the needs at hand. Despite a number of famines and harvest failures in the 18th century, the population was increasing from 1720, and, encouraged by the great mid-century expansion in the Irish economy, it accelerated, particularly in the closing two decades. By 1800, having doubled during the century, it was around 5 million, twice that of Portugal or Sweden. By 1845, the year of the failure of the potato crop which instigated the Great Famine, despite a slackening in the rate of increase³⁰ it stood at around 8.5 million³¹, a figure articulated in reporters' accounts of the swarming peasantry in many parts of the country. The growth over the century was unmatched anywhere else in Europe with the possible exception of Finland.³² This rise occurred in spite of increasing emigration. In the earlier 1700s emigration rates were relatively low, although considerable by European standards; but over the entire span of the 18th century emigration was high, notably into Britain with its latterly burgeoning industrial growth and, particularly from Ulster in the 1760s and '70s, into America. New levels, however, were reached by the early 1840s with Canada increasingly a destination after Waterloo. The movement from Ireland between 1815 and 1845 was probably unprecedented: "...between 1815 and 1845 alone Ireland may have provided over one-tenth of all those who had voluntarily crossed the Atlantic since Columbus."³³ Emigration may often have been resented, but in 1835 a Poor Inquiry commissioner recorded this fatalistic comment: "It is the will of Providence to increase the people ... and when they become too many they emigrate like bees out of a hive."³⁴

Despite increasing urbanization, the Georgian splendour of Dublin, and the later expansion of Belfast with the linen industry, Ireland was overwhelmingly rural. The pattern of agriculture was complex, regionally nuanced, and experienced certain shifts throughout the period. While beef prices remained most reliable and, by the time of the French wars, beef and butter underpinned the expansion in agricultural production, attention was turning to tillage from the mid-1700s with legislation enacted to encourage production. Nine Acts were in place by 1790. Commentators such as Charles Varlo had criticized the grazier economy for the ungraded extremes of wealth and poverty apparent in its

³⁰O Grada, p.118.

³¹McDowell, '1800', p.657; Freeman, p.244.

³²O Grada, p.118.

³³O Grada, p.120.

³⁴Binns, vol.i, p.64.

landscapes³⁵; but some of the grazing land and waste lands were now coming under tillage. Its extension was to come most notably after 1780, and was sustained by the buoyant economic conditions from 1793-1815. As a witness to the Poor Inquiry put it, the dwellings of labourers were better "... at the time Buonaparte was afoot."³⁶ Restrictions on the Anglo-Irish corn trade were removed in 1806. Ireland supplied two-thirds of the corn and flour imported into Great Britain at the height of the French conflict (1812-13), and for Irish suppliers the corn law of 1815 ameliorated the post-war reduction in prices. Between 1790 and 1815 landlords' incomes from their Irish estates had risen between 100 and 150%. But the economic prosperity did not reach all. Subsistence was increasingly difficult for the labouring classes within whose ranks the population rise was mostly taken up and which were being extended by the demise of weaving and small-scale manufacture. With increasing competition from one another, rising prices for the temporary occupation of patches of land, a landscape, in some areas, of farms subdivided to the point where hired labour was unnecessary, and with little or no economic surplus, their situation was grim.

Irish agriculture was proverbially inept and, despite occasional pleasant surprises and the activities of improvers, observers found much backwardness to comment on. Plenty of explanations were forthcoming: disinterested absentee landlords, lack of example, rapacious middlemen out to extract the maximum profit from their lease, uninhibited subdivision of farms³⁷, communal structures of landholding, insecurity of tenure, and fear of increased rents on the improvement of holdings. Some saw the Irish peasantry as showing immense fortitude in the face of adversity; others saw indolence and an innate incapacity to modernize. In the 18th century the domestic textile industry had become an

³⁵He named Meath, Westmeath, Longford, Roscommon, Tipperary, and Limerick as pastoral counties; p.64, 69.

³⁶Binns, vol.i, p.52.

³⁷Subdivision could occur in many ways - in various combinations subletting, taking a farm in partnership, splitting farms among children, and the kind of "trafficking" which Lord George Hill commented on and which may have been encouraged by Ulster 'tenant right' whereby an initial (and impoverishing but recoverable) capital payment was made for the occupation of the land (Hill, p.14, 16). Political interest could play a role. Caesar Otway's land in Tipperary had, before he acquired it, been held by a middleman who had subdivided it into a great number of small holdings to create 40 shilling freeholds thereby gaining influence in the county and affecting elections (Devon evidence, vol. xix, p.77). Subletting could result in a crippling scale of profit rents. Wakefield gives an example from Queen's county which resulted in minute holdings when owners of lands divided and let them. With population rise and competition, the holder preferred to get an assured profit rent rather than risk farming the land himself: "... his successor is caught by the same bait, till at last it descends to the miserable peasant, to whom it is rated at double its value at a rackrent, who is without capital to work it, and for the few seasons which he perhaps may hold it, is obliged to till it incessantly for corn crops, till its vitals are exhausted" (Wakefield quoting Sir Charles Coote, p.272). Subletting impoverished, but it at least had the rationale of self-interest. Division among children, on the other hand, was redolent of barbarity. One clergyman opined that the principle was "... interwoven in such a manner in the very constitution of their minds, that it seems next to impossible to eradicate it: the law of primogeniture but slowly obtains among all nations in a progress to civilization but the Irish seem peculiarly obstinate, in rejecting any approach to it" (Rev. Alexander Ross, Parish of Dungiven, Co. Londonderry in Mason, vol.i, p.308).

increasingly important part of the agrarian scene. Nowhere was this more so than in the linen industry of the north-east. Earnings from flax growing, spinning, and weaving, which were arranged on a domestic level, could be high but were subject to fluctuation. Good prices meant relative prosperity but it encouraged high population levels and great settlement density, extreme subdivision of farms, competition for land, and high rents. Atrophication of agricultural resources and increasing specialization progressively exposed the populace to market fluctuation. In the years before the Great Famine domestic industry was wasting, although it lingered in the north-east.

Tenure was becoming more precarious toward the end of the 18th century; the common lease of 3 lives, or 31 years for Catholics, became 21 years and as competition for land grew so did tenancies-at-will.³⁸ A buoyant economy and rising rents acted to discourage the granting of long leases; the financial security to the landlord of leasing to a middleman was less of an issue with greater profits available, and better management possible (consolidation of land, improved farming techniques etc.), by leasing directly to the occupying tenantry via a land agent. In part the higher profitability of Irish estates directed landlords' attentions more toward them. And with the example of 'Farmer' George III interest in agriculturalism rose and societies were formed. Small farm sizes meant less possibility for subdivision and the division of large units into small for the purposes of letting could be very lucrative with the extreme competition for small holdings pushing up the rents. ³⁹ There is even evidence that smaller farm units were expected to fetch a higher rent than larger as they obviated the necessity of employing labourers.⁴⁰

The mass of the rural population was increasingly sustained by the potato; without it Irish agriculture could not have assumed the specific pattern it did. In the mid-1700s reliance on it was a badge of poverty; by the turn of the century it was the staple food of the poor. It has been called the linch-pin of the whole system of tillage and embodied a remarkable collection of properties. It flourished on poor soils, ripening below ground protected from the weather; it was excellent for reclaiming waste land, preparing for corn, and extending tillage; relatively tiny areas of land under the crop could sustain life (thus

³⁸Cullen, p.116; MacDonagh, p.lvii.

³⁹"There is more competition for a small farm than for a large one; there would be twelve purchasers to one for a small farm above what there would be for a large one If I had one hundred acres I'd rather divide it among ten men; they'd pay me more rent" (Public examination, Upper Iveagh, Co. Down in Bins, vol. i, p.63-64).

⁴⁰Evidence of Capt. Robert Owen, Devon evidence, vol. xix, p.132-3.

encouraging subdivision) although its non-storability was ominous; it is the only cheap crop capable, by itself, of sustaining human life; and it was excellent fodder. For the cottier installed with his potato patch on the poorest corner of his employer's land, or the labourer renting annually let 'conacre' land for potatoes at an extortionate rate, it made life possible. It permitted extreme rural population densities, even in the absence of industry, and made peripheral waste-lands available for small-scale reclamation, an improvement which often raised the improver's rent to an unsustainable level.⁴¹ Some travellers found themselves sharing a family's potatoes in a cabin. Little was said against them; but the American Asenath Nicholson registered the complaint of one young man who recognised their complicity with his employer: "Three hundred and sixty-five days a year we have the potato' said a young man to me bitterly. 'The blackguard of a Raleigh who brought 'em here entailed a curse upon the labourer that broke his heart. Because the landholder sees we can live and work hard on 'em, he grinds us down in our wages, and then dispises us because we are ignorant and ragged.'"⁴² William Cobbett detested the potato too; 10 years earlier, in a letter to his illiterate labourer Charles Marshall, he fumed: "... the ever-damned potatoes! People CAN keep life in them by means of this nasty, filthy, hog-feed; and the tyrants make them do it, and have thus reduced them to the state of hogs, and worse than that of hogs."⁴³

The travelled landscape was one of increasingly visible poverty; affluence was less apparent. In 1841 over 60% of land (probably only 'improved' areas of arable and pasture) was held in farms of 50 acres or over, 12.5% in farms of 5 acres or under. But of the former there were 160,000 examples, and of the latter 1.3 million.⁴⁴ The larger farms predominated in the east and south-east - Kildare, Dublin, Waterford, Wicklow, Meath, Westmeath, Wexford, Kilkenny - but no county had less than one quarter of its farms under 5 acres.⁴⁵ The poor were apparent everywhere; they thronged the towns, their cabins accumulated at the town-edge, lined the roads, ringed large farms, and collected into squatter settlements on waste lands or coastal margins as if seeping, as J.H. Andrews has put it, "... through the cracks of an otherwise well ordered geographical pattern."⁴⁶ Small farms

⁴¹e.g. the Barony of Dromahair in County Leitrim where in some places it was common for labourers to be allowed to build a cottage on the bog. They reclaimed around 3 acres, and had permission to take three crops for which they did not pay rent. If they wished to stay on the land after that they had to pay whatever rent was demanded; otherwise they might be allowed to move to another portion of bog and begin again. Thus they gained only three years benefit from their work; Poor Law Inquiry, Appendix E, p.39.

⁴²Nicholson, p.242.

⁴³Cobbett, p.125.

⁴⁴O Grada, p.114.

⁴⁵Freeman, p.253.

⁴⁶Andrews, 1986, p.264.

predominated in Ulster and in the west, particularly Connaught and Co. Donegal. But it was the western districts, where commercialization was lowest, dependence on the potato greatest, land quality most uncertain, and population pressure on land extreme, in which poverty formed the most striking "... set-piece for astonished travel books in the early nineteenth century ...", the years leading up to 1845.⁴⁷ The Dublin based Reverend Caesar Otway, touring Connaught in the 1838, having passed through Athlone continued "... westward, through a district very ugly by nature, and instead of being improved, deformed by its inhabitants as you proceed to Ballinasloe, you pass through an almost continuous village and are forced to observe a wretchedly clad people inhabiting wretched houses, and carrying on a wretched and destructive tillage within minute enclosures, fenced by dry stone walls of the rudest construction possible ...".⁴⁸ The soil was exhausted, there were no cattle to produce manure, and the people were forced to burn an already too light soil as a means of stimulating it to produce a crop.

⁴⁷R.F. Foster, 1989, p.318

⁴⁸Otway, 1839, p.118.

c. The descriptions

It is worth travelling with the Reverend Otway for a time because he gives us some of the most revealing descriptions of the house clusters. Surveying a vacant and melancholy scene from the heights of Benwee in Erris he draws together a number of significant themes: "Looking down from the cliff of Benwee, upon all this intermixture of land and water ... and the whole surface of the visible earth (except in a few partial spots,) covered with the dull, desolate, sorrowful mantle of brown bog, with no sail upon the waters, no town on the shores, no habitation inland, except here and there a few huts huddled together, forming the ugliest thing in nature - a Connaught village; you could scarcely suppose you were on a part of the British Isles, or a portion of that empire which is the most wealthy, prosperous, and speculative in the world; an empire that is now exercising its mighty energies of capital and industry to people and cultivate the sands of Australia, and the dense forests of New Zealand; and here is a district in a state of nature, ay, worse than a state of nature; for man seems to have yet done little else than disfigure and abuse a tract that might be made productive..."⁴⁹ Australia and New Zealand appear in Otway's reverie cleansed of the marks of natives; they are sites of a pure untrammelled nature on which imperial civilization was being erected. The contrast with what lay before him was striking for the same pure nature was here defiled and deformed by the Irish village. First siting it within nature, he qualifies his thought setting, instead, the village against it; the settlement, it seems, subverted the form of nature. When Otway had visited the abbey of Cong in Co. Mayo during his Tour in Connaught, a similar sense of transgression pervaded. He reported that the abbey "... is now anything but beautiful, it is not even decent; the '*genius loci*,' outraged, we might almost personify it as weeping, while all around is disgraced and desecrated ...". The unfortunate building had become subject to piecemeal appropriation by the local inhabitants; its carvings and stained glass, amalgamated and recombined, had been grotesquely reconstituted as Irish grave memorials and now decorated "... as a jewel of gold, a swine's snout."⁵⁰

But it is in Otway's descriptions from Achill Island that the character of the Irish rundale village is thrown into most pressing relief. The structure of his narrative bears some attention. As a prologue Achill is established as a savage landscape. On arriving, Otway is given information about

⁴⁹Otway, 1841, p.314-315.

⁵⁰Otway, 1839, p.209.

what the island was like five years before his visit. The settlement pattern was one of villages and rundale agriculture. Closeby each village there was an enclosed area for crops, divided into separately-held ridges, with common pasture beyond. Otway comments that "... it was the system, I believe, which, before the English conquest, prevailed all over Ireland ..." ⁵¹ and directs those curious about the ancient Irish to Achill "...for I am convinced, the people five years ago were there in the very same state they were one thousand years ago, and *that* was barbarous indeed." ⁵² A certain animalism is indicated in the description of the inhabitants: "It is curious to see how this western people assimilated the colour of their clothing to the brown and dingy-red of the bogs amidst which they lived; all wild animals, in this way, have the colour of the glebe on which they lie." ⁵³ The villages themselves were without form, cast, as it were, onto the landscape rather than placed: "An Achill village consisted of a congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky..." ⁵⁴ Perhaps unsurprisingly with houses so *promiscuously* displaced (as the occupants of the Irish cabin, the interior of which had minimal functional gradation, arranged themselves promiscuously on the floor ⁵⁵) morality was poor: "...in short, these people had all the virtues and vices of semi-barbarians: gentle until their passions were roused - kind until they expected to receive injury, and ready to believe more of evil than of good respecting a stranger, and his motives for coming amongst them." ⁵⁶ The stage is now well set for the following dialectically-grounded epiphany. Otway enters the village of "Dugurth": "Just such a village as I have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place; and then, turning a corner of the road, and ascending an eminence, "the Protestant settlement" came into view, and truly it was a contrast to the congeries of wigwams called Dugurth; it consists of a long range of slated buildings fronting the south-east, and with its rere to Slievemore, that rises in great loftiness to the north-west, ornamented by a sort of pedimented building in the centre, having a handsome broad esplanade in front, on the other side of which extend some well-cultivated, well-ordered gardens. All this formed a *tout ensemble*, peculiarly striking and satisfactory, as connected with extraordinary contrasts that presented themselves on every side." ⁵⁷ This is a passage

⁵¹He also states that "...this was somewhat like the ancient Rundale system in England ..."; 1839, p.351).

⁵²*ibid*.

⁵³*ibid*, p.352, (footnote).

⁵⁴*ibid*, p.353.

⁵⁵e.g. "... Daniel Sullivan was a snug farmer, renting six cows'grass, and having the same number of children, who were lying promiscuously along the mud floor of the cottage" (T.C. Foster, p.537).

⁵⁶Otway, 1839, p.355.

⁵⁷*ibid*, p.356-357. Of the functional disposition of the colony Mr. and Mrs. S.C. Hall report: "It consists of a terrace, at one extremity of which is the school, with the offices connected with it; at the other are the infirmary, the mill, and the dispensary; and in the centre are a small hotel, the printing office, and the residence of the missionary-in-chief, the Rev. Edward Nangle" (Hall, vol.iii, 395).

of almost mythic resonance. From concealment and abjection we are moved to revelation via the metaphor-like devices of the turn of the road and the ascent. At this point the text develops a pictorial component. In the density of the printed text, its visual field, the missionary settlement is registered as an implant with the inverted commas bounding it and securing its honorific identity as surely as the building's geometric lines did in actuality against the savage Achill landscape.⁵⁸ Against this passage any reading of Otway's subsequent comment "... I soon found myself at home ..." simply in terms of the hospitality of the settlement's clergymen seems singularly inadequate.⁵⁹

The proselytizing of the mission, part of a wider evangelical movement⁶⁰, had set it at odds with the local Catholic hierarchy, and Otway, hiking across the island with a small 'bodyguard' from the settlement, was aware of the tension. Returning at the end of the day they had to pass through the cluster of Keel which was under priestly influence. "The village was larger than any I had yet seen, but the same want of any sort of regularity or decency - no street - the cabins all dropped, as it were, here and there.... altogether it was a savage place, nasty in the extreme."⁶¹ Its characteristics were evidently similar to the "... ugly barbarian looking village ..." that he had earlier seen on Clare Island.⁶²

In 1845 T.C. Foster, a barrister commissioned by *The Times* newspaper to investigate social conditions in Ireland and report⁶³, visited a two-storey model cottage erected by Lord Wallscourt on his estate near

⁵⁸The author continues to bracket the name of the settlement thereafter.

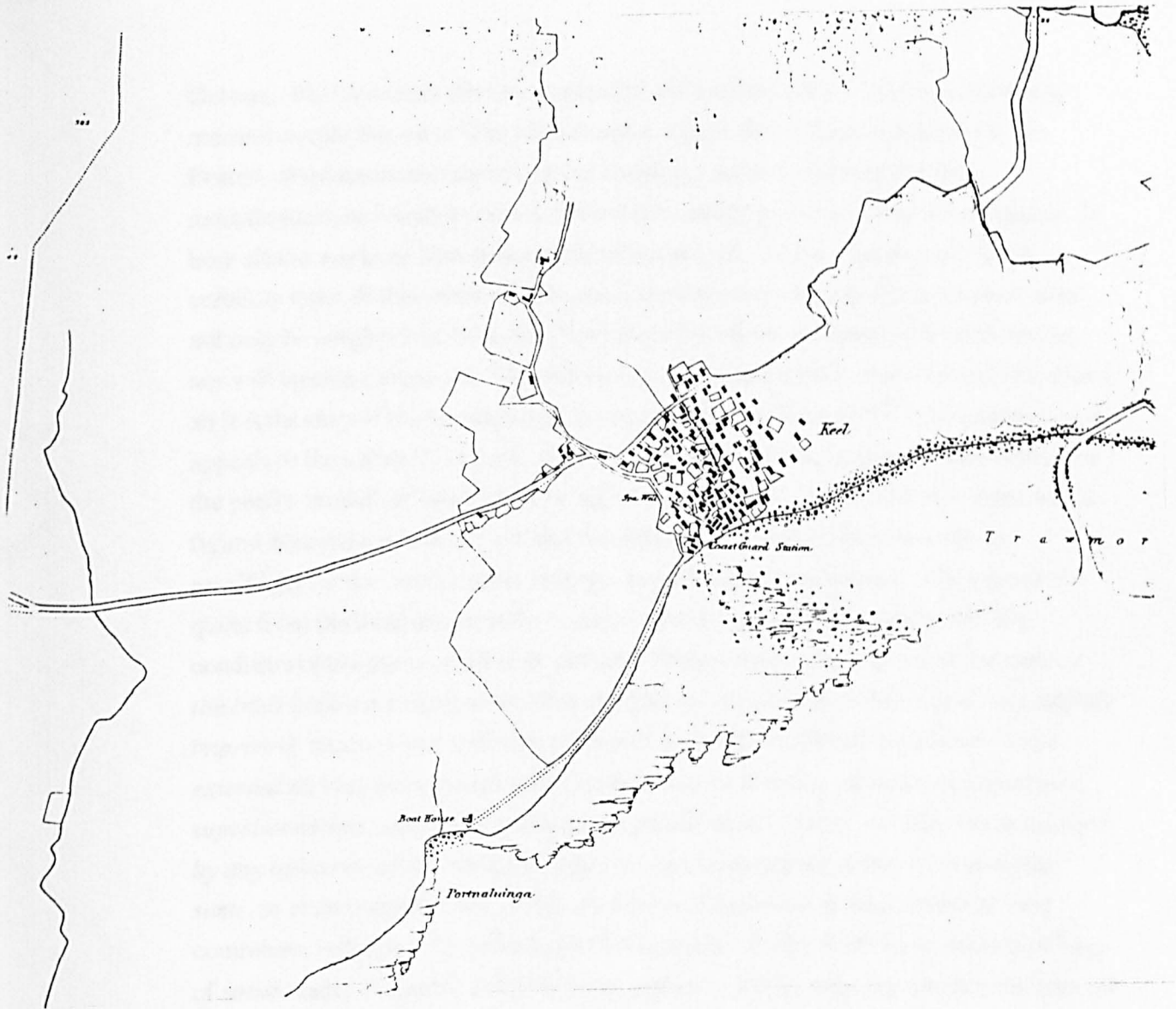
⁵⁹The Achill mission was a frequent destination for travellers interested in the related topics of spiritual, moral, and material reform, though not all found hospitality so forthcoming. Mr. and Mrs. S.C. Hall made it their principle purpose in visiting the island. Although sympathetic to the aims of the mission they found it ineffective and uncharitably conducted and advised its subscribers against contribution (Hall, vol. iii, p.394-401). The intrepid American traveller Asenath Nicholson, who held a somewhat radical position and strong religious convictions, found, some years after Otway's visit, no welcome there. She relates that about six weeks after her visit an article was published in the settlement's news-letter, the *Achill Herald*, which read "During the last month, this settlement was visited by a female who is travelling through the country She lodges with the peasantry, and alleges that her object is to become acquainted with the Irish character It appears to us that the principal object of this woman's mission is to create a spirit of discontent among the lower orders, and to dispose them to regard their superiors as so many unfeeling oppressors. There is nothing in her conduct or conversation to justify the supposition of insanity, and we strongly suspect she is the emissary of some democratic and revolutionary society" (Nicholson, p.268-269).

⁶⁰S.J. Connolly writes: "By far the most serious consequence of the religious revival of the early nineteenth century ... was the appearance among British and Irish protestants of a new enthusiasm for missionary efforts, directed not only at heathens in far-off places, but also to Christians nearer home, notably in the form of efforts to bring about a mass conversion of the catholic Irish. The first moves in this direction came from the Irish methodists, who in 1799 sent out their first three Irish-speaking missionaries to work among the catholic population" (Connolly, p.78). The Achill mission colony was established in 1833.

⁶¹Otway, 1839, p.405.

⁶²ibid, p.299.

⁶³His reports were published between August 1845 and 1846.



Keel. O.S. 6", 1st edition, Co. Mayo, Sheet 54. Surveyed 1838.

View of Keel from Hall's Ireland, 1843.

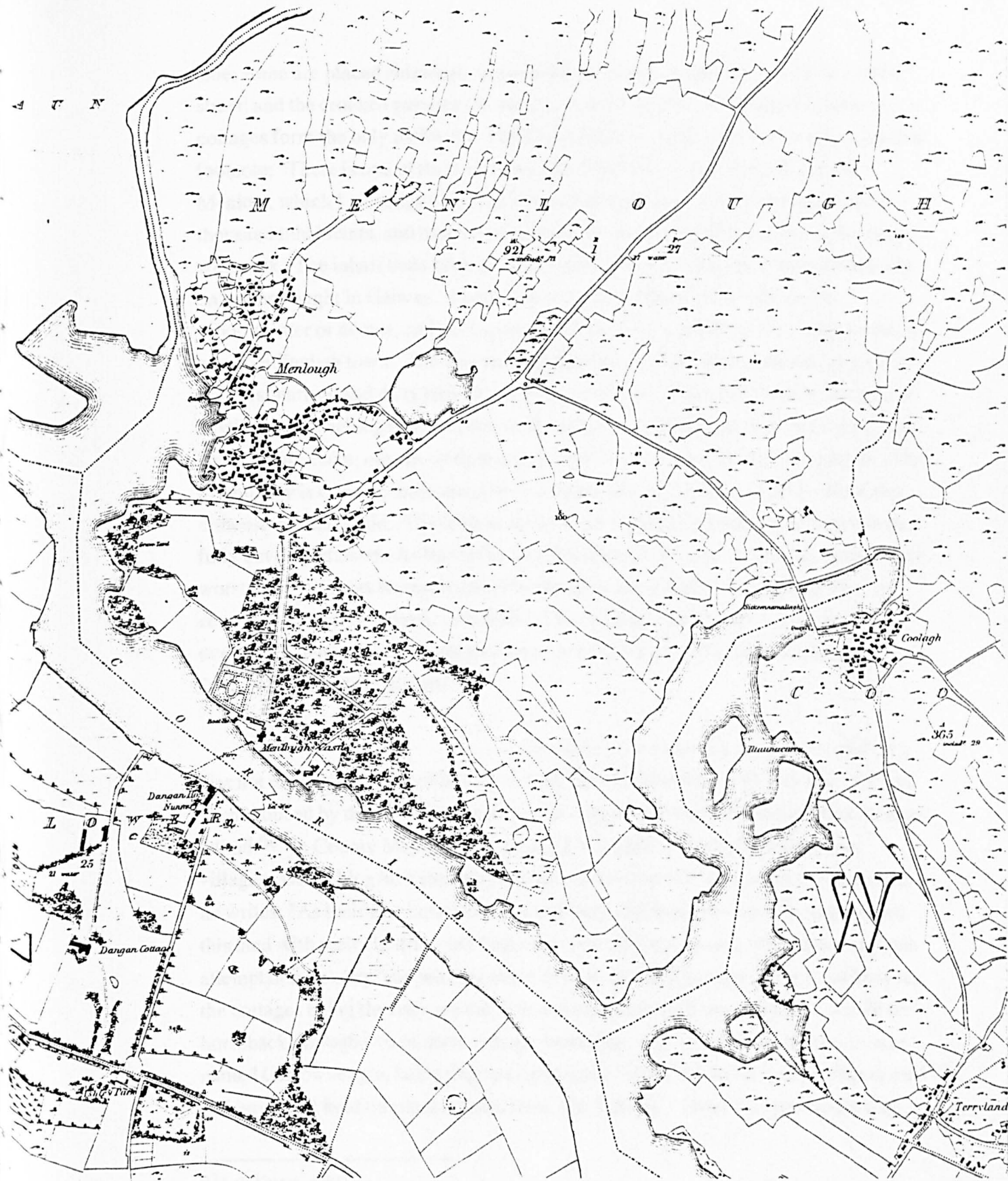
Galway. For five years after its construction it had lain empty until at last a newly married couple moved in who considered it at least better than nothing at all. To Foster's displeasure on inspecting the building, and to Lord Wallscourt's mortification, he found its model character thoroughly subverted by its occupants. It bore all the marks of Irish peasant life of the period. Foster commented: "How certainly does all this prove that the poor, uneducated, contented Irish peasant must not only be taught civilized habits, but forced into them: example alone will not do; nor will teaching alone do. This is the *duty* of the landlords to see effected, but above all it is the *duty* of the Government to insure its being effected."⁶⁴ The barrister here appeals to the authority of *Law*. The metaphysics of form, as it were, (betokened by the prefix 'model' or 'ideal') was being contravened. And consequently there was a figural distortion which always had the status of a deviation from the true as manifested in the 'model' farm, village, or missionary 'settlement'. He goes on to quote from the third report of the "commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland": *"Every thing connected with the state of the Irish in Great Britain shows that their mode of life is very slowly and very slightly improved, unless some civilizing influence descends on them from above - some external moving force independent of their own volition, as of masters, employers, superintendants, education, municipal regulations, etc. Wherever they are untouched by any influence of this kind, they appear, for the most part, either to remain the same, or even to deteriorate, whatever may be the amount of their earnings"* and comments, tellingly, "At the hazard of being made the object of the womanish railings of some vanity-wounded and silly Irish 'patriot', I would urge my conviction from all I have seen of the truth of this report."⁶⁵

Shortly before, Foster had considered the "Cloddergh fishermen"⁶⁶, a large and distinctive fishing community which lay near the quays in Galway City. Detecting names of Saxon, Norman, and Welsh derivation he asserted that "...the order of their houses was no less certain indication of race. Their houses are whitewashed and built in regular streets." It now becomes apparent that the author of the Law, the code of civilization, which was being contravened by the dwellings of the "unmixed" Irish is, in fact, God. "Take a real Irish Rundale village, and the difference cannot be mistaken: 'Order', which Pope sets down as 'Heaven's first law', you will look for there in vain. The cottages look as if pitchforked to one

⁶⁴T.C. Foster, p.295.

⁶⁵*ibid*, p.296. Foster saw the "womanish" trait of vanity as a characteristic of the "Celtic race". He linked it with their contentedness and the consequent need to force them to achieve progress and improvement; p.288-289.

⁶⁶Claddagh.



"Menlow"
O.S. 6", 1st edition, Co. Galway, Sheet 82. Surveyed 1839.

side; some are placed sideways, some endways, some cornerways, there is never a street; and the crooked passages in and out of the dunghills and irregularly-placed cottages form the only pathways. Their utter forlornness is pitiable." He goes on in a footnote: "There is one of these villages about four miles from Galway, called Menlow, which I visited, and which is a perfect curiosity. It contains about two thousand inhabitants, and their chief subsistence is derived from supplying Galway with milk. The inhabitants keep great numbers of cows, which they feed principally on grains bought in Galway. There is no church or chapel in the village; no schoolmaster or doctor, and no magistrate, though the population is as large as that of many an English town. The way through the village is the most crooked, as well as the most narrow and dirty lane that can be conceived. There is no row of houses, or anything approaching to a row, but each cottage is stuck independently by itself, and always at an acute, obtuse, or right angle to the next cottage, as the case may be. The irregularity is curious; there are no two cottages placed in a line, or of the same size, dimensions, and build. The Irish mind has here, without obstruction or instruction, fully developed itself. As this is the largest village I ever saw, so it is the poorest, the worst built, the most strangely irregular, and the most completely without head or centre, or market or church, or school, of any village I ever was in. It is an overgrown democracy. No man is better or richer than his neighbour in it. It is, in fact, an Irish rundale village."⁶⁷

Foster had been moving southwards and this was not the first cluster that he had visited. He had passed through Donegal and had been mobbed by the destitute population of a rundale village after setting foot on Aran Island.⁶⁸ In County Mayo, on the estate of Vaughan Jackson, he visited two villages. Describing how rundale settlements developed from a group of joint-tenants he writes: "As their numbers increased and their children grew up, they subdivided this land with their children, and built their cottages in a cluster, without the slightest attempt at regularity, and without street or lane, crooked passages in and out between the cottages being the only means of communication with one another I rode on horseback through two of these villages yesterday, still held in joint-tenancy, - one named Carrowbeggin, belonging to a gentleman named Atkinson, and another named Balderig, still held on rundale lease from Mr. Jackson. There was just room, with

⁶⁷T.C. Foster, p.292.

⁶⁸"I landed at a village called Labgarroo, containing twenty-four cottages, and almost the whole of its shockingly destitute and half-naked shoeless population immediately swarmed out and surrounded me, begging me to go into their cottages - such of them, at least, as could speak English - and look at their misery. Some thrust scraps of paper into my hands with petitions written on them, praying for assistance to keep them from starving, for medical assistance, to have their rents reduced, and so on: such an assemblage of wretched beggar-like human beings I never saw" (ibid, p.110).

care to ride my horse on the crooked pathway between the dunghills and cesspools."
⁶⁹ Under a programme of improvements Mr. Jackson "... put each man on a squared farm from 5 to 10 acres ..." and "... gave them a plan on which to built their houses, in the centre of their farms ...". Now rents were paid on time and disputes over property rights were avoided; "...they have got into habits of comparative cleanliness and order, and their industry has been remarkably increased, every portion of their land now being cultivated." Where other landlords have brought similar improvements "...the result has invariably been to *beautify* and improve the country ..."⁷⁰

Henry Coulter, correspondent of Saunders' New-Letter, travelling the west of Ireland in the early 1860s found the people of Connemara "... lamentably deficient in that practical common sense, patient persevering industry, and taste for the decencies and comforts of life, which constitute what I intend to express by the word 'civilization'." Yet their minds seemed acute and were well-tuned to legal niceties. Their gifts of intelligence, he thought, were "... warped and perverted by ignorance and prejudice of the grossest kind. They can comprehend a legal quibble, but they cannot be brought to understand the importance of steady industry in the cultivation of their land, or the disgrace of herding together like pigs in their squalid and filthy abodes ...".⁷¹ Such dwellings stood in stark contrast to the village of Letterfrack, "...a perfect oasis in the surrounding waste of mountain and of moor ..." established by members of the Society of Friends, which resembled "... a model English village, in the order, neatness, and cleanliness which are everywhere apparent."⁷² He was to meet Irish 'herding-together' most incomprehensibly in the wealthy rundale village of Clonkeen, between Westport and Castlebar in Mayo. A "... curiosity of dirt, irregularity, and confusion", all its inhabitants were well off, selling dairy produce and cabbage, in apparently huge quantities, to the nearby towns. Some, well off to the value of several hundred pounds, were money-lenders. Continuing, Coulter noted: "There is another rundale village, called Derrycoosh, about three miles from Castlebar, on the Newport road, which exhibits in an exaggerated form all the characteristics of the village I have just described. The cottages are built most irregularly, here, there, and everywhere - some parallel with the road, others at right angles with it Words fail to convey an adequate idea of the filthy and disorderly appearance which this village

⁶⁹Ibid, p.202. During his travels Henry Inglis learned to be reassured by the sights of a pig in a cabin and a dunghill by the door; they at least indicated some wealth and capacity to cultivate; Inglis, vol.i, p.94.

⁷⁰T.C. Foster, p.203. My italics.

⁷¹Coulter, p.83-84.

⁷²ibid, p.121.

presents. So bad is it, that a road is actually in course of construction for the purpose of avoiding the abominations of Derrycoosh."⁷³ But again this was a wealthy village; money had been saved but the standards by which the inhabitants lived had not been raised. Two reasons were forthcoming; the joint-tenure, acting as a check individual improvement, and the peculiarly Irish slavery to habit (perhaps to be understood historically as 'Irishness' and metaphysically as 'prodigality').⁷⁴

Scattered through other documents, one finds references to the morphology of Irish house clusters. Where it is broached, the emphasis remains similar; the houses are "... huddled together in clusters without the slightest attention to plan or arrangement ..." ⁷⁵, "... grouped together in the most irregular and careless manner in clusters from five to ten ..." ⁷⁶, "... built in a very irregular 'higgledy-piggledy' manner ..." ⁷⁷, "... huddled and packed together in the most incomprehensible confusion!" ⁷⁸, "... scattered distractedly among the crags, sprinkled along, *thickening* a little ..." ⁷⁹. It is overwhelmingly apparent that the clusters confronted their observers with a lack of, or deviation from, order; a lack of, or deviation from, form. In the more expansive commentaries we see this extend into the ideas of the settlements' affront to the natural and the democratic quality of their space. The settlements were in total reprehensible and abject, not least figurally; and in that abjection a certain political potentiality was harboured for the figure was one whose body had escaped the inscription of order descending, as the code of civilization, from above. Evidently what was missing was the sign of regulation, of a co-ordinating intelligence and, precisely, of authority.

It is not difficult to track the language of the earlier documents into those of the human sciences. Quoting, then, from some of the most influential descriptions - the 'clachan' "... was a formless cluster of small farm houses ..." ⁸⁰; possessed "... no ordered plan ..." ⁸¹; was "... characterized by an extreme disorder, as though the houses, in the words of one writer, had fallen 'in a

⁷³ibid, p.200-202.

⁷⁴ibid, p.202.

⁷⁵"Report of a Deputation Appointed by a Special General Court of the Iron Mongers' Company", 14th May, 1841 cited in McCourt, 1950, p.111.

⁷⁶OS Memoirs, Mss Box 30, R.I.A. Ballyscullin Parish cited in Appendix E, McCourt, 1950, p 98.

⁷⁷Tuke, p.54.

⁷⁸Hill, Useful Hints, p.14.

⁷⁹Carlyle, p.244.

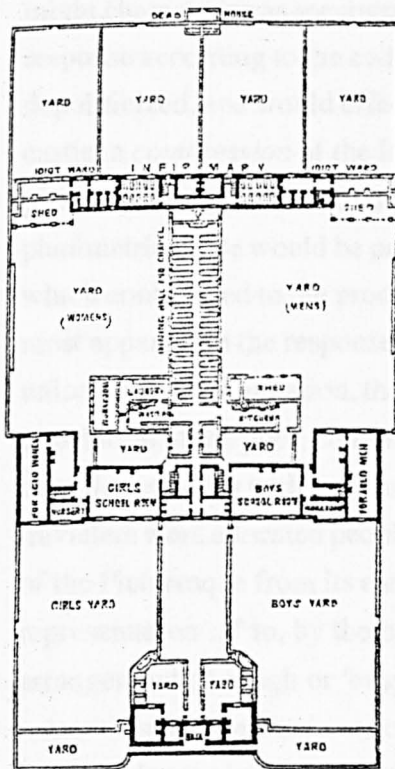
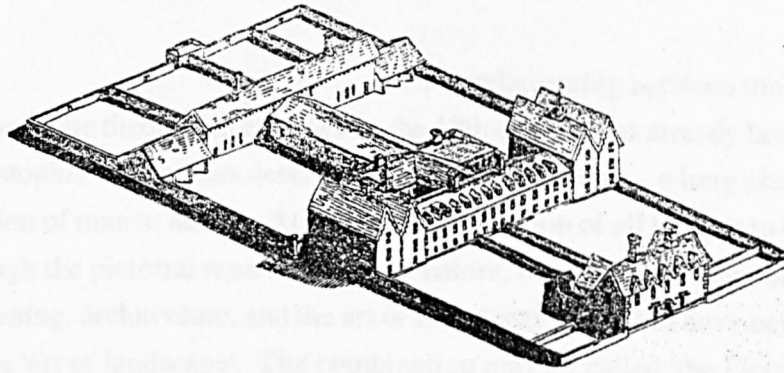
⁸⁰Evans, 1981, p.60.

⁸¹Evans, 1939, p.30.

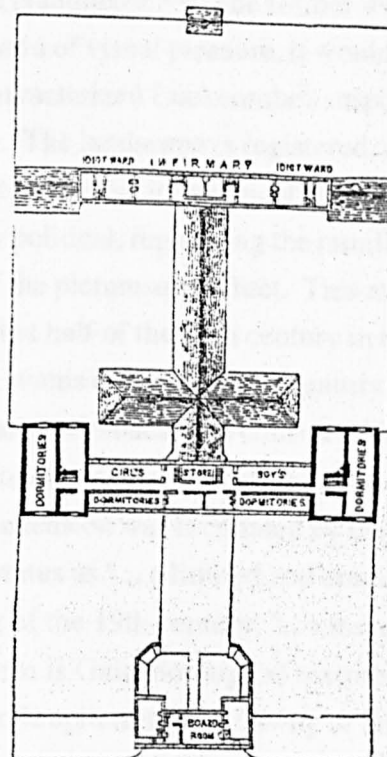
shower from the sky"⁸²; was comprised of houses "... clustered without plan or order ...".⁸³ Clearly we are still dealing here with the 'metaphysics of form' outlined above; the clusters are being thought about in terms of historically and culturally constituted conceptions which are presented as though transcendental. There are a number of questions which arise here which derive principally from the inheritance of these notions from, I will argue, a pervasive and wide ranging historical discourse on Ireland. These will be considered in the following chapters.

⁸²Evans, 1957, p.29.

⁸³Evans, 1942, p.48.



GROUND FLOOR.



FIRST FLOOR.

"The union workhouses themselves are all built on one plan The greatest benefit which can result from them, and I think it is one of their chief values, is, that they must tend to instill habits of order and cleanliness amongst the lowest class of the Irish poor. And never did neglected creatures, living their whole lives amidst filth and dirt and untidyness, more require teaching and showing the blessings of order and cleanliness." (T.C. Foster, p.559-560; illustrations from Hall, p.345, 347).

The relationship between travel in Ireland and the aesthetic theory that emerged in the 18th century has already been commented on. Christopher Hussey has described the Picturesque as "... a long phase in the aesthetic relation of man to nature. At moments the relation of all the arts to one another, through the pictorial representation of nature, were so close that poetry, painting, gardening, architecture, and the art of travel may be said to have been fused into the single 'art of landscape'. The combination may be called 'the Picturesque'."⁸⁴ How then did the Irish peasantry and its productions appear to this aesthetic sensibility? It seems to me that we can here discern a significant tension, enabled specifically by this aesthetic response, resulting from two distinct modes of apprehension which we might characterize as scenographic and planimetric.⁸⁵ The former would be a response according to the codified criteria of visual pleasure, it would be depoliticized, and would effect, as I characterized Luckcombe's response at Kilkenny castle, a *compression* of the landscape. The landscape is registered, as it were, on a picture plane; controlled and distanced by the eye its 'political' depth is elided. The planimetric mode would be profoundly political, registering the ramifications of that which contributed to the production of the picturesque effect. This mode would be most apparent in the responses of the first half of the 19th century in the context of the union and repeal agitation, the closing events of the previous century, a huge population of the poor, continuing agrarian violence, and considerable numbers of travellers moving with a primarily political and non-aesthetic agenda. But these travellers were educated people, and the tension was facilitated by the transformation of the Picturesque from its early 18th status as "... a limited and erudite mode of representation ..." to, by the beginning of the 19th century, "...a merely formal arrangement of rough or 'busy' (the term is Gainsborough's) texture ..." ⁸⁶ and romanticism. The planimetric is the mode epitomized by Otway or Foster; here the eye is no longer in control, rather the senses spin and the observer is dethroned, his body decentred. They are situated within the clusters, experiencing their spaces, walking or riding through them as opposed to the distanced aesthete collapsing their dimensionality. Something of this comes through in Thackeray's account of the

⁸⁴Hussey, p.4.

⁸⁵I immediately want to acknowledge this category as reductive. It is obvious that the concept of, say, 'order' was related to much more than morphology. But I stress, and go on to indicate, that it is always related to a notion of 'correct placement', whether with regard to social comportment, cleanliness, or anything else. Uncleanliness, for instance, results from the incorrect placement of material.

⁸⁶Hunt, p.231. The earlier sense was of material suitable for inclusion in a painting, and hence capable of conveying meaning.

houses of some beggars built against an old wall and on "...a rock that tumbles about in the oddest and most fantastic shapes ..." in Bantry, Co. Cork. He exclaims "I declare I believe a Hottentot kraal has more comforts in it; even to write of the place makes one unhappy and the words move slow. But in the midst of all this misery there is an air of actual cheerfulness; and go but a few score yards off, and these wretched hovels lying together look really pictureseque and pleasing."⁸⁷

Henry Coulter, writing in the early 1860s, remarked: "The condition of the dwellings of the people is a matter of very great importance; for if a man's house be neat, clean, and comfortable, it unconsciously tends to elevate his ideas, raise his standard of personal comfort, and increase his self-respect. Every landlord, therefore, who desires to better the moral and physical condition of his tenantry, should direct his efforts especially to the improvement of their cottages."⁸⁸ Asenath Nicholson displayed a similar belief; travelling to Dublin she noted beautifully cultivated fields and "...saw gardens joined to the most forbidding-looking hovels, where roses were blooming upon the walls, and even upon many a thatch were flowers. How can such a taste for farming and gardening be blended with such unseemly rags, such debased minds, and such lack of self-respect as many of these beings manifest? What must be the state of that people who can walk and breathe in such a paradise of delights, and not be assimilated in some measure to the more than enchanting prospects around them?"⁸⁹ For an age which subscribed to the ability of the aesthetic visual environment to effect moral uplift, the peasant in the Irish landscape could be a figure of peculiar and singular perversity. The juxtaposition of the abject peasant and the sublime Irish landscape was for some at least, a conundrum not exhaustively explained by the economic conditions of life for the former.⁹⁰ It was rather as if the paradox preceded the economic predicament and made it possible. T.C. Foster entering Co. Cork: "Nowhere in Ireland can you

⁸⁷Thackeray, p.354-355.

⁸⁸Coulter, p.304.

⁸⁹Nicholson, p.20.

⁹⁰So, for example, T.C. Foster, who registered surprise at the ineffectuality of the landscape (see below), could also write: "In filthiness and squalid poverty, starving on a rood of land with miles of waste around him, which the application of knowledge and industry would make teem with plenty, the poor Kerry farmer exists in contended wretchedness. Neglected by his landlord, he knows nothing beyond the growing of potatoes; oppressed by the hard-fisted middlemen, who lives by squeezing another rent out of his industry, he is steeped in hopeless poverty; cheated and robbed by the bailiffs and drivers, who extort from him his last sixpence for rent, and their fees; and pounced upon by the middleman for an increased rent, if he improves an acre of land, he learns by cheating and extortion from his betters and practices both on the wretched being who labours on his farm. In a hovel like a pigsty, in which it is impossible to stand upright, without chimney and without window, with but one room, an iron pot, and a rude bedstead, with some straw litter, as the only furniture, bed, or bed-clothes, the labourer, in the midst of half a dozen nearly naked children, with his barefooted wife, sits squatted on the mud floor round the peat fire. A garden plot of potatoes is their whole subsistence, and for this patch of land, and the hovel which shelters him and his family, his labour is sold to some farmer, who lets him his land and hovel, for a year." (T.C. Foster, p.388-389).

turn without being struck with the beauties or the fertility which nature has lavished on this unfortunate country; and yet, go where you will, there seems, as it were, a blight over all things. Man - amidst all this beauty and fertility - man, who elsewhere in Great Britain often beautifies that for which nature has done little, and converts barren wastes into fertile fields, has here done nothing, nay, worse than nothing. If there be an eyesore in the prospect, be sure it is the work of man - his wretched tumble-down mud hovel, or the boghole which he has carved in the hill-side. You will generally look in vain for a tasteful cottage, or for a wood, or for a garden, or for a hedge, or for a well squared clean field (unless it be close to some gentleman's domain, and they are indeed 'few and far between'); in fact, anything which can show the persevering application of industry or taste You see, too, dotted about, cottages so wretched that no description can convey an idea of them, in the very midst of scenery which you would think would exalt and refine the taste of a savage, and in the very centre of land lying waste with the materials for rendering it abundantly fertile, as it were offering themselves temptingly for use. There is something sadly wrong in all this ...".⁹¹ Earlier, too, in Connemara he had noted the strange conjunction: "It would be easy for me to describe the charms of bold and magnificent scenery - to picture amidst it misery and distress - to contrast the soul-elevating grandeur of the mountain and the precipice, and the rushing waterfall, with the debasing hovel of the native - to compare the purity of the glassy lake on the borders of which he lives with the cesspool at his door ...".⁹²

⁹¹ibid, p.399-401.

⁹²ibid, p.270.

Chapter 3. Interpreting Interpretation: Hermeneutics, Ideology and the Anaximander Fragment.

In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it....Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

Walter Benjamin. "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*. H. Zohn (trans). Fontana, London. 1992. p.247.

a. The status of knowledge in the human sciences: contingency, objectivism and power.

A recurring question and fundamental problematic for the human sciences, given that they must always reflect on the status of the knowledge that they acquire, is the ineluctibility of the positioning, and more precisely the separation of the positioning, of both parties in any form of engagement. To one side is the inquirer, historically and culturally located, educated and socialized in a specific context, bearer of expectations, anticipations, attitudes, beliefs, norms, commitments, and practices¹; on the other is the object of inquiry, whether textual, artifactual, or human, emerging in relation to an alterior configuration, strange, but to an extent of an already predetermined relationship to the inquirer and his or her milieu by its very selection as an object of investigation. The gap between the two constitutes itself across the vertical diachronic plane of historical transformation and rupture and the synchronic horizontal and spatial plane of the patterning of traditions of thought, culture, language, economy, and all. Implicit to the idea and practice of anthropology, within whose general domain one feels a study of the morphology of the clachan would probably rest, is a project of revealing, which is in turn predicated on the possibility of translation. Lévi-Strauss writes that "While sociology seeks to advance the social science of the observer, anthropology seeks to advance that of what is observed - either by endeavouring to reproduce, in the description of strange and remote societies, the standpoint of the natives themselves, or by broadening its subject so as to cover the observer's society but at the same time trying to evolve a frame of reference based on ethnographic experience and independent both of the observer and what he is observing."² It is the "strange and remote" nature of the other and the task of reproduction that is key here; the project is to unveil what is concealed, to make the unintelligible intelligible. The anthropological epistle, its report, always has an addressee; it is sent to someone for their information, and hence in their terms of understanding, to one's community whether national, scientific, or professional. George Steiner, arguing for the fundamental and inseparable relationship between translation, interpretation and understanding reports that "The schematic model of

¹While committed to the idea, and evidently the possibility, of objectivity, Lévi-Strauss allows: "Our current vocabulary, which is the product of our own social and mental categories, is in fact inadequate to describe markedly different types of sociological experience. We must resort to symbols, like the physicist when he wishes to show what is common between, say, the corpuscular theory and the wave theory of light; here, in the language of ordinary man, the two notions are contradictory, but since science regards them as equally 'real', it is necessary to employ new symbols to be able to proceed from one to the other." But given that such a metalanguage emerges to resolve contradictions already apprehended in terms of the said categories, the question of objectivity again arises.

²Lévi-Strauss, "The Place of Anthropology...", p.363.

translation is one in which a message from a source-language passes into a receptor-language via a transformational process. The barrier is the obvious fact that one language differs from the other, that an interpretative transfer, sometimes, albeit misleadingly, described as encoding and decoding, must occur so that the message 'gets through'.³ The initial search then is for a system of correspondences which will traverse the gap, acting as the foundation of this "transformational process". So the anthropologist will look for weapons, tools, religious beliefs, and institutions, functional categories within which phenomena can be grouped, or across which they can extend, and related back to the domain of the addressee. Secondary, and this is what allows the sense of a 'scientific understanding' of the culture, are questions directed at the phenomenon of difference itself; questions, that is, which aim to determine the constitution of the culture and the 'why' of its configuration.⁴ To this end a multiplicity of internal relationships are identified, functional connections isolated, dysfunctions accounted for, correspondences, oppositions, simultaneities drawn out. We thus say that we understand a given phenomenon insofar as we feel that its specific form accords with its postulated location in the field of relationships. One might say, following Jurgen Habermas' distinction, that the former stage relates to the "historical-hermeneutic sciences" inasmuch as it is 'terrestrially' located and concerned with understanding meaning, and the latter to the "empirical-analytic sciences" inasmuch as it is 'zenithally' located and concerned with analysing the conditions of occurrence and inter-relationships of the understandings received. It is the attendant possibility of prediction in the latter which gives the sense of 'scientific understanding' referred to.⁵

As cartography takes up a more or less unknown landscape and translates it into a conventional representation presenting it in such a way that it can be understood, its relationships determined and certain possibilities exposed, by one who has the appropriate training and knowledge, likewise the possibility and project of anthropology rests on a similar translative movement. The problematic lies of course in the pivot of translation. The anthropological ideal is of an absolutely transparent translation; this would be a movement from whose passage no deformation resulted so

³Steiner, p.29.

⁴The idea of capturing the essence of the other, the possibility of determining precisely what it is that makes the alterior form, is pushed to its culmination with the collection of genetic material from endangered ethnic groups. This project is directly linked to the likelihood of the extinction of those groups. This is surely the ultimate position of a scientific objectivism in which the other is reduced to a resource or 'material'.

⁵"The verification of lawlike hypotheses in the empirical-analytic sciences has its counterpart here [the historical-hermeneutic sciences] in the interpretation of texts. Thus the rules of hermeneutics determine the possible meaning of the validity of statements of the cultural sciences" (Habermas, 1972, p.309).

that the anthropological portrait could be said to be true insofar as truth signifies correctness and absolute fidelity of representation. Thus gaining the standpoint of the other would be assured, a holism that shadows Lévi-Strauss' statement "Whether anthropology is described as 'cultural' or 'social', its object always is to discover *the whole man* as revealed in the one case through his *works* and in the other through his *representations*...".⁶ With the collection of such truths the material becomes available from which, via empirical-analytic method, propositions of universal validity might be achieved, thus allowing sociology to reach its positivistic form: "Social anthropology is devoted especially to the study of institutions considered as systems of representations, cultural anthropology, to the study of techniques which implement social life (and sometimes also, to the study of institutions considered as such techniques) it is obvious that if the data resulting from the objective study of both complex societies and so-called primitive societies should ever be successfully integrated to provide universally valid conclusions from a synchronic or diachronic point of view, then sociology, having attained its positivistic form, would automatically acquire the crowning position among the social sciences that its scholars have always coveted. But we have not yet reached that point."⁷

As such absolute recuperation would depend on an ideally objective investigator (which, as will be argued, is itself an oxymoron) the question that hangs over this statement addresses itself to science, specifically as it operates in the study of humankind, and its claims to attain objectivity and hence its privileged access to truth undistorted by interest, commitment, or myth. The assumption of objectivity carries with it the idea of a peculiarly one-sided encounter which is designed in view of the subject's aim of acquiring knowledge. We thus have a distinction between an active observing subject whose knowledge increases and a passive object that endures unchanged. Clearly the relationship between subject and object can never be said to be neutral; Ian Donaldson and Tamsin Donaldson, making a by now familiar analogy, write: "To shoot or poison the local people and appropriate their land is to exercise one kind of power. To measure their heads, cover their loins, record their tongues, sketch their faces, or film their ceremonies is to exercise quite another kind of power, milder, subtler, often benign in its intentions, yet possessed none the less of its own significance, implying a relationship of subject to object, observer to observed....".⁸ The power in question is the power to stage the

⁶Lévi-Strauss, "The Place of Anthropology...", p.356.

⁷Lévi-Strauss, "Introduction: History and Anthropology", p.3.

⁸Donaldson and Donaldson, p.15.

encounter on certain terms and in view of certain ends and to determine the object of inquiry and objectify it through the application of a variety of techniques. In the case of anthropology the self-consciousness of the investigator, the awareness of his or her project and its representational imperative, together with the technical resources to fulfill it, marks the distinction between an active observing subject whose knowledge, intention, and technical resources set out the conditions within which the encounter is circumscribed and a relatively passive object in whose very passivity the claim to have investigated the quotidian must lie. Indeed the aim of living for an extended period of time with a group is to become absorbed into the object, to become part of that group's 'self', thus promoting the above passivity by masking the radical ontological strangeness of the anthropologist. A science assured of its objectivity claims, after its investigative procedure, to be the ultimate judge of the object; it claims the ability and right to define it, to recognize and represent it as it truly is, even beyond its own claims.

Twentieth century continental philosophy has mounted a forceful assault intended to disabuse us of science's claim to objectivity⁹, particularly in its guise in the human sciences under Positivism. It argues that science is a social project interested in a certain type of knowledge (that emerging with reference to predictability and therefore possibilities for intervention and manipulation) and is itself necessarily located with its own traditions embodying certain norms and standards and criteria for verification and falsification. These points have found support from some in the Anglo-American empirical tradition (Thomas Kuhn¹⁰, for example) who note that scientific observation always occurs already conditioned by theory, and hence there can be no observation or verification uncontaminated by tradition. In these circumstances one must say that what science takes as objective facts cannot be properly understood as that but rather as what stand for objective facts in the scientific tradition. For Habermas objectivism's refusal to problematize the subject serves to conceal its inability to lie outwith human desire and so masks the relationship between knowledge and human interests. On these views the scientific investigator cannot be said to be transcendental and value-free but is necessarily historically and culturally positioned; in fact his or her scientific training, with its unacknowledged interests, would be part of that constitution. It is of course the aim of

⁹Largely initiated in the late 1930's with Edmund Husserl's "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology" in which he argued that the world, which now becomes the life-world, is always apprehended and shaped from the point of view of the experiencing individual human entity. Science rises necessarily predicated on this, and presupposes the truth of the life-world as a given external to perception, thus forgetting to thematize the position of the scientist.

¹⁰Kuhn.

method in science to systematically dispense with prejudice and anticipation; but however successfully it may achieve this, it preserves its own tradition unproblematically. And preceding method and shaping it is the commitment to the project of science¹¹, to the account of the world that it will bring, and to its objectives.¹² It is this latter point on which Hans-Georg Gadamer laid emphasis when distinguishing between the natural and human sciences while, at the same time, insisting on their common conditions of possibility. (The special characteristic of the human sciences is identified here as its involvement with extra-scientific experiences, such as the aesthetic). "It is hardly a contrast of methods The difference that confronts us is not in the method but in the objectives of knowledge. The question that I have asked seeks to discover and bring into consciousness something that methodological dispute serves only to conceal and neglect, something that does not so much confine or limit modern science as precede it and make it possible."¹³ Gadamer argues that the inevitable condition of being positioned is the pre-requisite for interpretation and understanding¹⁴, and is therefore the condition of possibility for the knowledge and practice of science. The move beyond one's situatedness, on which the possibility of the objectification of the other is properly predicated, rests on the paradoxical notion of forgetting oneself, of putting oneself into abeyance, of leaving one's historical constitution with its predispositions, orientations, and linguistic tradition behind.¹⁵ It is important here to recognize, given the hermeneutic stress on language, that anthropology emerged directed outward from technologically advanced and wealthy countries whose great economic and industrial expansion was related to colonial enterprise, or from countries who share their language, under whose force certain formations of language were instigated. Central to the critical position of Habermas is the argument that under conditions of domination language is systematically distorted in

¹¹ Habermas, noting that while in "...all the sciences routines have been developed that guard against the subjectivity of opinion..." writes "Because science must secure the objectivity of its statements against the pressure and seduction of particular interests, it deludes itself about the fundamental interests to which it owes not only its impetus but the *conditions of possible objectivity* themselves" (1972, p.311). By this I take him to mean the interests concurrent with the objectification of the other; for example the splitting of the subject from the object allowing a self-contained subject to exert control over the object.

¹² We might also see predisposition and anticipation entering science in the use of metaphor. The world as a linear machine, perhaps, or Gerald Edelman's recent comparison of the operation of the human brain with that of a string quartet. The ability of metaphor to direct and circumscribe thought is well illustrated by Richard Rorty's critique of the persistence of Greek ocular metaphors for knowing and their power in directing and inhabiting subsequent epistemology; he contends that "It is metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions." (Sacks; Edelman; Rorty, p.12).

¹³ Gadamer, 1988, p.xvii.

¹⁴ The sense here is that one understands precisely to the extent that one interprets. One does not understand a poem in copying or repeating it word for word; rather understanding occurs with the apprehension of the meaning of the poem and its restatement. Likewise with experimental data; a result is only understood when it is brought into contact with theory and expectation and restated in the light of these.

¹⁵ Ricoeur, 1981, p.75.

accord with certain interests, a distortion which is ideological and as such proceeds unacknowledged. The designation of specific configurations as ordered and their promotion as self-evidently correct would be a distortion of this nature.

b. Heidegger, the Anaximander Fragment, and the hermeneutic motion.

In search of an approach to the clusters which would start to negotiate the rigidity of their closure I will initially turn to Martin Heidegger's striking scholarship on the "Anaximander Fragment", a portion of early Greek text. Heidegger's concentration on a fragment is of interest here. The general phenomenon of the fragment lies in a special position with regard to us. Its recognition relies on the apprehension of it as incomplete, as lacking, and as such a sign for a larger unity that is lost. While in truth the condition of the fragment is the condition of all historic artifacts, the image of the fractured entity penetrates and grips us with greatest force. History has been enacted on it and it displays time's marks with greatest urgency; it is mysterious and is in a restless state, calling for an impossibly assured completion. The historic fragment is an entity doubly distanced from us, by time and by its truncation; it directs attention to the contingency of our interpretations, a contingency through which the call to make the familiar strange becomes operative. As Walter Benjamin so clearly recognized, the field of the collector is the field of fragments. In his archive the collector dissolves the discriminations of tradition, redeeming the object torn from the past. "Against tradition the collector pits the criterion of genuineness; to the authoritative he opposes the sign of the origin."¹⁶ As a possession of the collector, the fragment is an item of simultaneously full, yet truncated objecthood. "The task of the critic and that of the collector ... retains the destructive element of Benjamin's methodology, especially since in the context of established traditions, 'the concepts of those who dominate have always become the mirror (of a kaleidoscope), thanks to which the image of an 'order' came into existence. The kaleidoscope must be smashed."¹⁷

In his seminar of 1941 entitled "Das anfangliche Sagen des Seins im Spruch des Anaximander", Heidegger examined a shard of pre-Socratic text, the original transcription of which is lost, but which appears in paraphrased and quoted form in works by Plutarch, Hippolytus, and Simplicius. The passage of the text through these 'secondary' works is further complicated by their reliance in turn on a lost paraphrase and quotation of Anaximander by Theophrastus. Questions arising from the relayed text evidently continued to concern Heidegger during the early 1940s for, in 1946, he completed "The Anaximander Fragment" a reflection which came to occupy the

¹⁶Arendt, p.48.

¹⁷Frisby; Benjamin quotation from 'Zentralpark' in *Gesammelte Schriften I*, p.660.

concluding pages of the collection of essays entitled "Holzwege" ("Woodpaths").¹⁸ The woodpaths of the title are the tremulous and circuitous footways of the Bavarian forest on which all but the woodsman are strangers and which lead mostly into dense and impenetrable thicket. Reading, one reaches "The Anaximander Fragment", perhaps the oldest trace of Western thought evidenced to us by our tradition, by way of a series of essays on poetry, art, and modern philosophy. The importance of Heidegger's reflections for the present work rests on his concern with the problems of interpretation, translation, and so relevance to our present situation, of an historically distant artifact which subsists ontologically in a position always anterior to the linguistic and conceptual matrix patterning our own thought. In the light of these problems his questioning turns crucially on an idea of translation which achieves a mutual movement in both the translator and the material under consideration. Under these conditions the reperformance of translation seems to estrange us from the material as unquestioned and traditionally sanctioned understandings are displaced and what is familiar in its stable historical closure is induced to rest in a new relationship to us; according to Heidegger "The translation will draw the fragment away from us and leave us in an astonishing and disturbing place."¹⁹

The fundamental critical insight, with which Heidegger commences his consideration of Anaximander's text, is that the various translators who have preceded him, and to whom he is indebted, have assumed a conception of the world in their rendering of the fragment which is an inappropriate context in which to consider pre-Socratic thought. The commonly accepted translation of the fragment, which Heidegger cites, reads: "Whence things have their origin, there they must also pass away according to necessity; for they must pay penalty and be judged for their injustice, according to the ordinance of time."²⁰ Usually it is assumed that Anaximander is speaking of a natural economy of origin and decay which involves questions of transgression, judgement, and retribution, and in which flowering and falling are ultimately referred back to some ineffable origin. But the tendency has been to articulate this assumption in terms of categories which were established and properly belong to periods after the pre-Socratic. Thus, in Heidegger's terms, "what comes to language" in the fragment, what is significant in its voice, is stifled below a deceptive familiarity. Heidegger suggests that "In order to translate what comes to language in the fragment, before we do any actual translating, we must consciously cast aside all inadequate

¹⁸Heidegger, 1963.

¹⁹cited in Rapaport, p.50.

²⁰Heidegger, 1975, p.13.

presuppositions."²¹ This will mean that initially, in order to animate the text, we must try, in some sense, to overcome our historical situation and grasp what was thinkable in language for the pre-Socratics. So, Heidegger sets aside any notion that the ethical and judicial matters spoken of in the fragment were interpreted in terms of the disciplines that we call 'ethics' and 'jurisprudence'. Furthermore, as the categories fall away, so too does the possibility of unjustified or transgressive transfer of notions from one area to another. This allows the fragment to be seen as evidencing aspects of reflection in which the question of Being is raised before metaphysics defines and compartments categories of experience. "Once there was no physics and no physical mode of thinking, no ethics and therefore no ethical mode of thinking, because these categories had not yet been articulated and constructed." It is as if "... Anaximander's fragment were key to grasping what in section 32 of 'Being and Time' was called a "forestructure of understanding", in this case a forestructure that anticipates the history of metaphysics even as it presupposes its main concerns."²²

According to the wording, the text revolves around *οὐτα*, and Heidegger is concerned to use the fragment in order to re-think our relationship with that word and to examine the gap that he intuits between the language of our thinking and the language of Greek philosophy. He suggests that if we take *τα οὐτα* to mean 'beings' and *εἶναι* as nothing else than 'to be' this gap is foreclosed and unnoticed. It is passed over in the translation of the Greek words into our most foundational, familiar, and unthought concept. What is at stake for Heidegger is not whether previous translations are 'correct', but rather "... whether in this correct translation we also think correctly. We ask only whether in this most common of all translations anything at all is thought."²³ Anaximander's text exists for us as a chain of equivocal and imprecise significations. Recognizing this, Heidegger proposes moving forward by attempting to cross over to what he sees as the source of the fragment's voice which lies first of all outside the fragment itself. We must, he suggests, seek the opportunity which will let us experience what *τα οὐτα*, thought in Greek, says. "Furthermore, we must at first remain outside the fragment because we have not yet delineated each of its terms; this delineation is ultimately (or, in terms of the matter itself, in the first place) governed by

²¹ibid, p.21.

²²Rapaport, p.50.

²³Heidegger, 1975, p.23.

the knowledge of what in early times was thought or thinkable in such a choice of words, as distinct from what the prevailing notions of recent times find in it."²⁴

To enable him to effect this delineation, Heidegger forgoes the Platonic and Aristotelian writings feeling that in these *οὐ* and *οὐτα* are already conceptual terms which have suffered a constriction in meaning and which are probably truncated forms of the original words *εὐ* and *εὐτα*. Instead he turns to the opening section of Homer's *Iliad*, a text antecedent to the pronouncements of philosophy. Heidegger's consideration of Homer allows him to suggest a conception of *τα εἶτα*, beings, which ambiguously names what presently endures and what is absent, that is, what has been and what is to come. He signals the inter-relationship of 'absent' and 'present' when he writes: "What presents itself as non-present is what is absent. As such it remains essentially related to what is presently present, inasmuch as it either comes forward into the expanse of unconcealment or withdraws from it. Even what is absent is something present, for *as* absent from the expanse, it presents itself in unconcealment. What is past and what is to come are also *εὐτα*. Consequently *εὐ* means becoming present in unconcealment."²⁵ Homer tells us that Kalchas the seer knew all that is, is to be, or once was. Heidegger describes him as a "madman", someone who is outside himself, away from the ".... sheer oppression of what lies before us"²⁶ Heidegger can claim that the seer is ambiguously away to what is absent, that which is presently present in its absence. In his sight all things that are present and absent are gathered together in their true relationship and are held in view.

²⁴ibid, p.28.

²⁵ibid, p.35.

²⁶ibid.

The specific conclusions of Heidegger's scholarship on The Anaximander Fragment matter less to us here than his approach to the material. And it is indeed Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics with the notion of a mutual movement in both interpreter and text that, together with the Platonic dialectic, exerted such influence on Gadamer's efforts to establish a philosophical hermeneutics resting on a dialogical relationship between the human individual and the historically situated artwork or artifact. The hermeneutic problem originally had been raised within the limits of exegesis, within the framework of a tradition which proposed to understand a text beginning with the intention lying behind it, with what it attempted to say. This problem of interpretation was identified through the recognition that all reading takes place within some form of community, tradition, or living current of thought which displays presuppositions and exigencies which work to distance the reading from that in view of which it was written. Aristotle's *Peri hermeneias* fixed a connection between interpretation and comprehension in which the former was taken in the sense of textual exegesis and the latter in the sense of the clear understanding of signs. *Hermeneia* then was meaningful discourse which interpreted reality to the extent that it was able to say 'something of something'. It was not, however, until the end of the 18th century and the start of the 19th century, under the impetus of problems arising from the development of classical philology and the human sciences, that the hermeneutic problem became an issue for modern philosophy. Crucial to this was the Positivist Wilhelm Dilthey's essay of 1900 "The Origin of Hermeneutics". In the context of Dilthey's project, which was to develop an empirical approach for philosophical investigation inspired by the procedures of the natural sciences, the hermeneutic problem was an epistemological one. In these terms, the central project was to develop a critique of historical knowledge which could then be subordinated to the diverse procedures of classical hermeneutics.²⁷

Gadamer felt that although Dilthey tried to insist on the epistemological and methodological independence of the human sciences from the natural sciences, this distinction was ultimately betrayed and collapsed in the face of an uncritical application of what was effectively scientific methodology to the human sciences. Despite Dilthey's sensitivity to the dangers this allowed the relationship between the individual

²⁷Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics", p.3-5.

and the historical event to become reduced to a subject-object relationship. Gadamer quotes from Dilthey's obituary for Wilhelm Scherer: "He was a modern man, and the world of our forebears was no longer the home of his spirit and his heart, but his historical object" and comments "Hence Dilthey saw scientific knowledge as involving the dissolution of the connection with life: the establishing of a distance from its own history, which alone makes it possible for that history to become an object."²⁸ In the space between subject and object dissolved the distinction between the natural and human sciences as in both cases questions could be addressed ".... to an object already fully present, to an object which contains every answer."²⁹

With his account of language as "the horizon of a hermeneutic ontology" Gadamer sought to demonstrate that a commitment exists through language in all understanding, and so mounted a critique of objectivism. His thinking fundamentally revolves around the inevitability of the historic constitution of the 'subject' and the master-role played by language in that formation. The 'subject' is always itself an effect of what he terms *effective-history*, that is the playing-out across time of the consequences of the multiplicity of historic events which bear on one. He writes that "... history does not belong to us, but we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life."³⁰ The 'subject' can seek an understanding and recognition of the fabric of its constitution, but it can never stand outside itself, losing even language, the condition of an objective determination. Thus the task of *effective-historical reflection*, of self-knowledge, is ongoing but is never fulfilled. "To exist historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete. All self-knowledge proceeds from what is historically pre-given because it is the basis of all subjective meaning and attitude and hence both prescribes and limits every possibility of understanding any tradition whatsoever in terms of its unique historical quality."³¹ He thus reports that the 'subject' necessarily occupies, at any given moment, a *situation* which limits the possible *horizon* which encompasses the field of interpretative possibilities and meanings. The field is open to view and is apprehended in a network of relationships which articulate relative

²⁸Gadamer, 1988, p.8.

²⁹Gadamer, 1979, p.127.

³⁰Gadamer, 1988, p.245.

³¹ibid, p.269.

significance. But below the central eye there would seem to be a 'mundus', a repository of what is unconscious, of what is not seen, but what locates the 'subject' and must, in part, configure the field before it. Its excavation would be commenced under *effective-historical reflection*, but it is an excavation destined to remain incomplete. Neither *situation* nor *horizon* can be understood as static but must vary with historic experience; and it is this motion which gives the 'subject' its radical historicity. The situatedness of the 'subject' results in predispositions and commitments in any act of interpretation, and, as its historical constitution is in greater or lesser part shared with others, so the orientations would be shared. Someone within a tradition who recognized meanings absolutely unanticipated would be mad or touched by the divine or demonic.³²

The legitimate moment of interpretation is understood as a dialogue, and in particular a dialogue which seeks agreement with reference to an object. For Gadamer the interpreter questions always with a view to the enlightenment of the present, to self-understanding, and to action and practice through an appreciation of the claim of the other. The dialogic focus on an object is a provisional acknowledgement of the validity of the opinion and enterprise of the other, that is, an openness in the present to the call of its voice. Gadamer's concern is that without an object the other itself becomes objectified, loses its voice, is isolated as a discrete historical object, suffers definition and closure, and the interpreter fails to experience its claim and hence fails to experience him or herself through it. The "inalienable historicity"³³ of the text is overcome for the inquirer in its capture in the field of historical objects. Gadamer writes that when we objectify the other "...we have given up the claim to find, in the past, any truth valid and intelligible for ourselves. Thus this acknowledgement of the otherness of the other, which makes him the object of objective knowledge, involves the fundamental suspension of his claim to truth."³⁴ (Any truth, at least, that we might apprehend). The interpretive encounter proceeds with the necessarily contingent acquisition of the historical *horizon* of the other. It is here, surely, that Heidegger's activation of Anaximander's words through the examination of their semantic possibilities in the context of their emergence can be located. In dialectical fashion the interpreter places him or herself in the situation of the other, crucially with expectation restrained³⁵ and intent on experiencing the alterity of the

³²For example, the 'gift' of the interpretation of the speech of one speaking in tongues, which of course derives its divine quality by the sense of it being sent from 'outside'.

³³Gadamer, 1988, p.357.

³⁴*ibid*, p.270.

³⁵"...it is constantly necessary to inhibit the overhasty assimilation of the past to our own expectations of meaning. Only then will we be able to listen to the past in a way that enables it to make its meaning heard" (*ibid*, p.272).

other. Gadamer anticipates the completion of the dialectical triad in his notion of the *fusion of horizons*, a reconfiguring of the horizon of the interpreter in which the view of the other is incorporated. Two points should be noted here. Gadamer writes that "The interpreter does not know that he is bringing himself and his own concepts into the interpretation. The linguistic formulation is so much part of the interpreters' mind that he never becomes aware of it as an object."³⁶ One can never discard oneself or fully realize one's constitution. In view of this, how does one respond to "...the legitimate demand of historical consciousness", that is "...to understand a period in terms of its own concepts..."? Gadamer's reply is that "The call to leave aside the concepts of the present does not mean a naive transposition into the past. It is, rather, as essentially relative demand that has meaning only in relation to one's own concepts."³⁷ Indeed the notion of placing oneself in the position of another means that oneself, and therefore one's *horizon*, must be brought.³⁸ It is understood that the encounter with the other has a critical function in exposing and testing our predispositions and prejudices³⁹, that is in reconfiguring our *horizon*, and this seems sound. It is the experience of the otherness of the text through the acquisition of the historical *horizon* which gives it a voice able to impinge on our present *horizon* of understanding. It should be noted though that the veiled predispositions of the 'subject' will be at play both in the projection of the historical *horizon*, itself an interpretation, and in the interpretation of the text in light of this. Such orientations which animate the other in a particular way will not be experienced as a difference by the 'subject's' experience of the other (unless one can gain, by chance as it were, some purchase through the logic of the text) and so will go unrecognized with the critical function here elided. While Gadamer insists on the contrary, there would seem to be a significant difference between a dialogue involving people in which mutual interpretation and therefore potentially active and shifting challenges to the interpretations of the other can be made and the encounter with an artifact or text in which critical possibilities are reduced. However, despite the existence of unarticulated prejudices it is clear that for Gadamer there is always a validity available in the encounter with the other. He speaks of 'understanding' and 'misunderstanding', a distinction meaningless unless there is some prior and enduring strata of correspondence between the 'subject' and the other. Gadamer, in other words, must subscribe to the ultimate permeability of each horizon. The encounter with the other is underwritten by, and communication is

³⁶ibid, p.364.

³⁷ibid, p.358.

³⁸ibid, p.271.

³⁹ibid, p.273.

grounded by (and presumably concept formation in the last instance rides on), its occurrence within what he posits as a grand unifying *horizon* manifested by the essential unity and historic interconnectness of humankind and the unity of word and thing, the 'common idea concerning the thing', essential to the philosophy of *logos*.⁴⁰ This avoids a radical pluralism in which communication is truncated while, though eschewing the elevation of the unifying *horizon* to the level of a knowledge (which would then be 'absolute'), maintaining the essential finitude of the individual 'subject'.

While the possibility of communication is confirmed and we are given the idea of 'understanding', that understanding must be relative to the particular hermeneutical situation from which it is achieved. Through understanding the interpreter has moved the text in view of his or her position, and as such that particular understanding may only be apprehended and confirmed with contingency from outside. The inevitable tendency of this account is to lead toward an uncertainty regarding the status of individual understandings. Thus Gadamer insists that there can never "...be any one interpretation that is correct 'in itself'" of a text.⁴¹ But then, if recognition of understanding is in the last instance internal, who understands, who misunderstands, and who arbitrates? And what indeed is the anticipated 'truth' of the object other than a pious encoding of the valorization of tradition? For Gadamer understanding is synonymous with the application in the individual's life of the meaning understood. The test of the interpretation then would seem to be whether the applications are subject to the consent or dissent of the voices in the community in which they occur. Is, in other words, the 'truthfulness' of the application recognized by those largely sharing the hermeneutic situation of the interpreter? But there are clearly problems here; fascist, fundamentalist, nationalist, and xenophobic readings may easily command consent. It is this lack of an adjudicative function internal to Gadamer's hermeneutics that led to Paul Ricoeur's criticism of his work. It is noteworthy that in "The Anaximander Fragment" Heidegger takes care to distance himself from any straightforward claim that his translation transparently represents for us Anaximander's intentions. He writes:

⁴⁰Ricoeur, 1981, p.75. "Just as the individual is never simply an individual, because he is always involved with others, so too the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a culture is an abstraction. The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never utterly bound to any one standpoint and hence can never have a truly closed horizon When our historical consciousness places itself within historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with our own, but together they constitute the one great horizon that moves from within and, beyond the frontiers of the present, embraces the historical depths of our self-consciousness. It is, in fact, a single horizon that embraces everything contained in historical consciousness" (Gadamer, 1988, p.271).

⁴¹Gadamer, 1988, p.358.

"Neither is it clear and firmly established what we ourselves are thinking in the words 'being' and 'to be' in our own language;
nor is it clear and firmly established whether anything we are liable to come up with suits what the Greeks were addressing in the words οὐ and εἰπαί.

Neither is it at all clear and firmly established what οὐ and εἰπαί, thought in Greek, say;
nor can we, granted this state of affairs, administer an examination which might determine whether and how far our thinking corresponds to that of the Greeks."⁴²

Herman Rapaport notes suggestions that Heidegger adopted Anaximander in order to present preconceptions worked out prior to investigating the Greeks. "Heidegger is often considered, then, as one who merely uses figures like Anaximander as hosts for a refined critique of ontology that the pre-Socratics themselves would not have recognized. And yet, Heidegger appears quite aware that such parasitism is always the condition under which any ancient text is to be received as transcribed or trans-lated."⁴³ It seems to me that, although we might broadly agree, we would be right to feel uneasy about the specific wording of this disclaimer. If the result of the encounter with the historical material is preconceived then the dialogue is foreclosed and the radical open-endedness of the encounter is dissolved. In Gadamer's terms, since the end is predetermined, the encounter structurally becomes teleological and so resembles *techné* (productive knowledge) instead of *phronesis* (practical judgement) in which the end must lie open as the inquiry, although guided by principles and understandings, must be resolved anew for each situation, a concept which Gadamer wants to serve as a model for the hermeneutic approach.⁴⁴ Crucial, it would seem, is the critical function of contest and logical defense of the interpretation of the material. Events in the 20th century well illustrate the dangers of selective historical investigation calculated to yield resources for the shoring up of presently- held ideologies. Given Gadamer's account, the locus for the critique of such positions would seem to be the exposure of the interpretations to considerations in more expansive contexts and currents of thought than that in which the interpretations emerged.

⁴²Heidegger, 1975, p.24.

⁴³Rapaport, p.32.

⁴⁴Gadamer, 1988, p.278-289; Aylesworth, p.67.

But now we approach a clear question over Gadamer's formulation which, paradoxically, his thought on historicity did much to define. His approach seeks an 'openness' toward the other, an engagement of good will and acknowledgement of the other which dialogue seeks to stand for but cannot ensure. How can the 'subject' be assured of this and its own non-domination? The critique of objectivism crucially locates a lack of transparency at two sites, both identified largely through the recognition of the historicity of the 'subject'. The first subsists between the 'subject' and the 'object', the second is within the 'subject' itself. The notion of the opacity within the 'subject' is proposed against the ideal unified Cartesian *cogito* whose assurance of total self-knowledge and therefore self-command rests on its transparency to itself. The assault on the Cartesian ideal came in decisive form in the 18th and early 19th centuries with Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud⁴⁵, the initiators of what Paul Ricoeur has called a 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. What is meant here is that with Marx's critique of ideology and Freud's psychoanalysis a suspicion of immediate consciousness emerges; immediate consciousness is now false consciousness, a masking yet signalling effect of deeper forces.⁴⁶ The result is that the 'subject' becomes a stranger to itself. It no longer occupies a zenithal position from which it can penetratingly inspect itself, but it is constituted and marked through with a play of forces of which it is only part conscious. Thus the 'subject's' interpretation of the object of inquiry itself becomes an object of interpretation. As Ricoeur notes, the 'subject' that interprets itself while interpreting signs is no longer the Cartesian *cogito*.⁴⁷ This dismantling can be seen as the recognition of historicity; the subject is possessed by history and its discourses before it possesses itself. The 'openness' of the 'subject' toward the other is, in short, never assured. The interpreter may understand him or herself to be approaching the other in good faith, but his or her discursive location may be such that the resultant interpretation operates in collusion with certain interests. Thus Ricoeur's fear that without techniques of self-criticism hermeneutics would be given over to the self-validation of concealed interests and desires, and his attempt, by exposing the 'subject' to the techniques of psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology, to develop a way in which competing interpretations could be arbitrated. But what is unclear here is precisely the point at which

⁴⁵Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics", p.18.

⁴⁶Psychoanalysis leaves "...a *cogito* which understands its primordial truth only in and through the avowal of the inadequacy, the illusion, the fakery of immediate consciousness" (Ricoeur, "The Question of the Subject", p.243).

⁴⁷Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics", p.11.

such a critique would logically come to rest since a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' would have to extend to the interpretation of the interpretation of the interpreter, and so on.

Questions of psychoanalysis, ideology, and the claims of hermeneutics lie at the core of the extended debate that developed between Habermas and Gadamer.⁴⁸ Habermas was concerned with an account of the process of interpretation which was unable, as he perceived it, to tackle the problem of ideology. Here ideology is to be understood as a systematic and unacknowledged deformation of language occurring under conditions of social violence and domination. Class domination emerges with human labour mobilized in the interests of those in power; ideology appears with the rearrangement of motives to give the appearance of rational justification. For the earlier Habermas the situation was directly analogous with psychopathology in which pathological or neurotic behaviour is understood as a result of violent experiences at an earlier stage which are then withdrawn from the sphere of public communication and privatized, the resultant void being filled with the symptomatic behaviour. The *communicative competence* of the individual and his or her processes of self-understanding, and hence ability to reflect on and apprehend the problem and to act rationally, is thus impaired. The role of the analyst, and his or her theoretical framework, is to trace the symptomatic behaviour back to the original trauma, the analyst's process laying an Ariadne's thread along which the desymbolized meanings can be articulated and retrieved into the domain of public language and the patient's understanding. Likewise Habermas argues that the role of the critical theorist is to promote a society's self-understanding and *communicative competence* by decoding ideology and revealing its distortions of language which structure everyday understandings; through critique the reifications are dissolved. The ideal under which the critical theorist operates is one of unconstrained communication, a condition free of coercion which Habermas posits as necessary for wholly rational deliberation on claims.⁴⁹ His concern is that a hermeneutics resting on dialogue between individuals will be bound to everyday communication and the self-understanding of society and so will not be able to penetrate and realize strata of force and domination underlying that speech.

⁴⁸see Habermas, 1977 and 1980; Gadamer, "On the Scope..." and "Supplement II: To what extent does language preform thought?" in 1988, p.491-498; McCarthy; Mendelson; Misgeld; Warnke.

⁴⁹Ricoeur comments "An eschatology of non-violence thus forms the ultimate philosophical horizon of a critique of ideology ... This eschatology, close to that of Ernst Bloch, takes the place of the ontology of lingual understanding in a hermeneutics of tradition" (Ricoeur, 1981, p.87).

In her extended consideration of Gadamer, Georgia Warnke, who points to Marx's consideration, in the first volume of *Capital*, of the buying and selling of labour power as the classic analysis of ideology, expresses doubts over Gadamer's riposte that, as the discipline of exposing meaning, the task of exposing ideology belongs to hermeneutics.⁵⁰ But it seems to me that it is difficult to deny the primacy of Gadamer's claim here. Marx noted how the conceptual trinity of freedom, equality, and a common right to property were deployed in the market, under Capitalism, which appeared "...a very Eden of the innate rights of man."⁵¹ Freedom appears in the way in which buyer and seller are not by law bound together (as under Feudalism) but rather freely enter through common will into a contractual relationship; equality because, as with the exchange of commodities, an equivalency of values is the basis for exchange; property because each party exchanges only what is rightly his. But the rhetoric of freedom conceals the compulsion for one partner to sell his labour to ensure his survival, that of equality conceals the dependency of one class on another, and that of a common right to property conceals the right of the employer to appropriate the economic surplus produced by the worker. The point to consider here is under what conditions is Marx's critique possible. His analysis is contingent upon his recognition of a wider range of significations and possible life-situations for these concepts than were consciously in play in the rationale of the market. To be sure, as Warnke points out, each of the concepts has a validity in its conscious application but under the cover of that distraction meaning is concurrently repressed. That this process can be recognized at all is a sign of the relative peripheral weakness of the systematic ideological distortion. There seems to me to be no reason why, as Warnke appears to suggest, ideology is ultimately peculiarly resistant to hermeneutic penetration. What will be crucial is the hermeneutic situation of the interpreter inasmuch as he or she is not conditioned by the deformation of the language game and so stands in rather close proximity to the 'quasi-objective' position of the critical theorist. It would be exactly the condition of sharing the public language game but yet being beyond it through the acquisition of historical and other knowledges that would properly allow a 'deformation' to be identified. Marx's analysis (an analysis being necessarily an interpretation of what represents the affective 'structural components' of a larger entity and their operative inter-relationship) of the rhetoric of the market illustrates, I think, the properly critical moment of hermeneutics.⁵² The interpreter carries an expansive

⁵⁰Warnke, p.115.

⁵¹Marx, p.280; Warnke, p.115.

⁵²Here I acknowledge Habermas' comment about the apparent one-sidedness with which Gadamer paints the hermeneutic encounter which tends to reduce the sense of 'critique' in his account (Habermas, 1984, p.134; Warnke, p.132-33) There seems to be an assumption that the other has an epistemological edge on the

conception of categories which allow recognition that those categories are appearing in only certain impoverished forms. The questioning then turns to the 'why' of this phenomenon which shifts attention onto the disciplinary and legitimizing structure that maintains it. From this recognition and shift in attention the theory of ideology and an interpretive framework is developed, necessarily occurring and dependent upon the initial hermeneutic interpretations of the situation. My inclination is to see this shift as equivalent to the shift Gadamer suggests must occur whenever recognition of the 'truth' of the primary claim of the other does not occur. We are then directed to an exegesis of the conditions under which the claim could appear to be true to the person making it.⁵³ In this regard Habermas' claims that in psychopathology such framework structuring the therapy precedes hermeneutic understanding is problematic. The framework rests precisely on a theory, a theory which in turn rests on ideas of what counts as normal or pathological behaviour, of what the structure of the mind and its mechanisms are, of what represents normal processes of socialization, etc. A theory, that is, constructed in the light of certain traditions and prejudices. How can it be claimed then that such a framework is objective, that it is not a result of necessarily positioned interpretations, and that the analyst and critical theorist occupy a privileged position from which pathological symptoms can be correctly and deformations located? What, indeed, gives a group the right to be an adjudicator of deformations of language and communicative competence of other groups as if there was a pristine uncontaminated language of full plenitude which it has access, and which it can mark the deviations from? Who, as Gadamer comments, can claim to be the doctor of society and to define what counts as pathological behaviour?⁵⁴ Habermas, does however, pose difficult questions for Gadamer, particularly with regard to the general effectiveness of hermeneutical critique. The possibilities for such critique will depend on the expansiveness of the public life-world and so would diminish with its atrophication and with the homogenization effected by the thoroughgoing penetration of society by technology and by the discourses it conveys. It is easy to sense here the ease with which hermeneutics could simply become prey to ideology. Dieter Misgeld writes: "In Habermas' view, we are ... faced with the question whether democracy will survive under conditions of the increasing power of technocratic models of decision-making, of the huge gap in information and knowledge existing between highly specialized groups of

interpreter. But I think that this is a confusion caused by his insistence of the need for an initial 'openness' toward the other and also by his concentration with textual others in which case the text cannot learn from the inquirer. The condition is different in an inter-subjective encounter in which the dynamic of dialogue is potentially less restrained.

⁵³e.g. Gadamer, "On the Problem...", p.46.

⁵⁴Nicholson, p.161.

policy-planners and policy-makers, on the one hand, and the 'general public', on the other. We are also faced with an enormous concentration of wealth and power in the hands of increasingly smaller groups of people. Systems of action in society, such as the economy, public and corporate administration, or the military, have become so specialized that they are cut off from the life-world of communication and practical deliberation, to which Gadamer alludes. This life-world itself is subverted in its structural organization by the force of these concentrated action systems, as Habermas puts it...".⁵⁵

The notion of deformation can be maintained (as opposed to simply difference) provided that what is now perceived to be withdrawn can be shown to have been otherwise available, even if unrealized, but for the formation of the ideology. Clearly meanings can be supplemented and transformed or may fall away in time, but the task of the critical theorist would be to demonstrate a specific form of this whereby, in collusion with and in support of powerful interests, there is a schizophrenic splitting and part masking of the concept which must be considered a reduction in the range of its applications. This is to be apprehended, it seems to me, not so much through the application of a theoretical framework as through the writing of a history, itself necessarily an interpretation, which locates the processes and relationships of distortion. What I feel is fundamentally common in Gadamer and Habermas, given the emphasis on reflection in both, is the possibility of a discursive history. In Gadamer we find this in his discussion of effective-historical consciousness which, as we have seen, he uses to refer to the necessarily incomplete self-awareness of one's historically conditioned situation. Indeed he offers a definition of the aim of philosophical hermeneutics so: "...to move back along the path of Hegel's phenomenology of mind until we discover in all that is subjective the substantiality [i.e. what is historically pre-given] that determines it."⁵⁶ This is a programme for a 'total history' of language. From the apprehension of such substantiality the 'openness' toward the other would derive; through this Heidegger's translation is facilitated. The critique of ideology moves around its perception that language has already been deformed and so is immediately involved in a discursive history inasmuch as present consciousness is seen to derive from a mutilation instigated in the past. Authentic consciousness becomes available when, through the recognition of that history, language is retrieved and barriers to communication and self-understanding are dissolved. The history is, as Ricoeur puts it alluding to Habermas' psychoanalytic analogy "...an explanatory stage, such that the sense is understood only if the origin of

⁵⁵Misgeld, 1991, p.169.

⁵⁶Gadamer, 1988, p.269.

the non-sense is explained."⁵⁷ The essentially historical nature of the enterprise is apparent in Schroyer's comment that "The intent of critical theory is to reconstruct the generation of historical forms of consciousness in order to demonstrate how they misrepresent actual social relations and thereby justify historical forms of domination."⁵⁸ Habermas, in his critique of Marx, comments that "...ultimately a radical critique of knowledge can be carried out only in the form of a reconstruction of the history of the species..." and that "...social theory, from the viewpoint of the self-constitution of the species in the medium of social labour and the class struggle, is possible only as the self-reflection of the knowing subject."⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ricoeur, 1981, p.85.

⁵⁸Schroyer, p.viii-ix.

⁵⁹Habermas, 1972, p.62-3.

d. Discourse and the idea of order

Heidegger, Gadamer, and Habermas have alerted us to the conditions of possibility of any act of interpretation and to the crucial factor that the discursive location of the interpreter plays. With Gadamer and Habermas we distinguish between the benevolent inflection that the former gives the notions of 'prejudice' and 'tradition' and the latter's anticipation that they maintain frozen forms of social domination and violence and so must be undone. The consequences of these accounts for any endeavour that seeks to understand from the 'other side' is clear. Firstly the locatedness of the inquirer must be thematized and acknowledged as both inevitable and enabling; secondarily, and as a problematic of this locatedness, we must recognize that with the persistence of ideological formation the 'openness' that Gadamer calls for is foreclosed, interpretation occurs with reference to hidden interests, and is truncated at that point. The interpretive encounter, so instrumentalized, is thus enacted more through confiscation and censorship than dialogue. The confiscation tends toward completion with the penetration of the other with the discourses of the dominant culture and their subsequent generalization.

Heidegger's effort to bring the Anaximander Fragment into a position of relevance to the contemporary situation hinged, not on the reading of the text in terms of current ideas, but rather on a strategic distancing, by way of discursive dismemberment, through which the contemporary could experience its alterity. Now the historic closure of the text is unsettled and it is made fresh; what was familiar is made strange. An artifact has been animated, and the structures which had previously constrained its meaning are thrown into relief. At this stage, then, I want to outline several questions. How, today, do we stand with regard to the clachan clusters? What do they evoke when we turn to them? How securely is their meaning assigned; how secure is their historical closure? What relevance do they have, could they have, for us? How can we approach them through the recognition of their irreducible alterity yet opening the way for some sort of translation, understood here as a motion which brings the discrete into a relationship? What is at stake here, in general terms, is the liveliness of the historic artifact, its dialogical possibilities with the present, and the availability of the historic field as an expanse of potentialities.⁶⁰ Reactions to the clusters by 18th and 19th

⁶⁰It is an eschatological view of history's advance which of course militates against the latter with a view of particular and characteristic stages in the motion of history and a corresponding tendency to insist on the

century observers could generally be located, it would seem, somewhere on a scale that moved from the bewildering to the reprehensible. The clusters were signs of poverty, indolence, and ill-practice; they were overcrowded, polluted, and above all unreasonable. The houses were primitive and insubstantial, thick with bodies and choking smoke, and the clusters linked to a system of agriculture which was uneconomic, litigious, and which exhausted land. All this is evident; but the argument here is that not just were the material characteristics of the Irish peasantry understood as base, low, and dirty, but so too was their corresponding spatial organization. While the physical conditions of the crowded clusters and their spatial qualities were not unconnected, with the dishevelled organization of the dwellings promoting tortuous and ineffective drainage routeways and stagnancy, the more germane and resonant relationship lay between the space itself and ideas of uncleanness, unhealthiness, and all. Formally the clusters did not accord with conceptions of ordered form, an order that was valorized *a priori*.

When those observers interpreted the clusters, they spoke out from a long and potent tradition of commentary on native Ireland in which the perceptions of formlessness and disorder were taken to be key co-ordinates. But what is the genealogy of this notion of 'order'? What is this valorized 'order' that allows the perception of the clusters, and on what is it founded? What interests might underlie the designation of certain form as ordered and other as not? The concept will not be transcendental; it will be a construct, order being recognized when certain traits are fulfilled. The idea may appear to signal intentionality, but it is important to realize that here the disordered is not necessarily the arbitrary but simply that from which the traits signalling order are absent. With the designation of the other as disordered the observer judged and understood in terms of the deviation from his own ideal. When, in the 20th century, with Estyn Evans scientific inquiry identified the clachan cluster as a topic of study, it appeared unable to divest itself, or critique, certain of the predetermined categorizations. Consequently this inheritance became operative within the scientific project. Not only was thinking on the morphology of the clusters truncated at the perception of their 'disorder' (which one presumes carries implications of lack of communal intention and cuts the morphology adrift in autonomy, dysfunctionally without

'newness' of form. So we have, for example, Brecht's attack on the promotion by Lukacs of the form of the 19th century novels of Tolstoy and Balzac as a paradigm for socialist writers of the 20th century; as the characteristic form of a particular stage in class history it had a proper and authentic relationship only to that period. New form needed to emerge in relation to shifts in society and economy. For Ernst Bloch however, (literary) "...history was the *Erbe*, a reservoir in which nothing was ever simply or definitively 'past', less a system of precepts than a sum of possibilities. Thus, no work was wholly to be discounted because of its divergence from this or that aesthetic canon." (Adorno et al., p.9-99 (p.13-14)).

relation to social structure and practice) but the understood lack of form was raised to the position of a definition.⁶¹ Investigation of, and thought on, the morphology was thus foreclosed and faltered at a definition which mechanically founded the clusters purely in the terms of historically and culturally determined presuppositions borne by their observers. The clusters were ideologically defined. The effect is akin to the assertion that another culture's food is tasteless; the other culture is determined from the standpoint of one's own, we are told nothing about the experience of the food in the other culture, and, entering discourse, the categorization precedes experience and tends to close the possibilities of what that food could be to us. The clachan as the 'other' was, as it were, a prisoner of an unproblematized dominant discourse operative in the domain of scientific inquiry. And the economy of power in this relationship, the power to define the other, which acted against the ideal goal that anthropology sets itself, seemed to pass unnoticed. One of the liberating aspects of Evans' thought was his sensitivity to the experiential qualities and benefits of situations and milieux that received wisdom denigrated, and the attendant implications for a universal rationality. The fitness of a way of living *as* a way of living could not be adjudicated from outside by a transcendent reason; rather what was crucial was the internal relationship, the experience of that life from the perspective of one living it.⁶² What is significant here is the ability of that mode of living to existentially ground the individual and community. Thus enterprises of 'self-evident' reason or goodness might only have that status for the proposing group, and the individuals upon whom the enterprises were to be enacted might see things quite differently and consequently display an incomprehensible resentment, lethargy, or sheer bloody-mindedness. Following on from this was Evans' awareness of the social functions and legitimizing effects of mainstream academic history and his continued insistence on the need for representations of those excluded by that history. All this must be read against his intellectual location which is within the tradition that sprang from 18th century Romanticism, an oppositional movement, and developed in the 19th century with the plethora of regionalisms dedicated to the recuperation and documentation of local practices and knowledges, a dialectical strand locked in opposition to the homogenizing and

⁶¹ So Graham writes "Proudfoot's accepted definition of the settlement form describes a clachan as a small cluster of farmsteads and associated outhouses, grouped without any formal organization" (Graham, p.39). So we will recognize a clachan always by its 'lack' in relation to the formed and the ordered.

⁶² The argument against this rests on the status accorded to the testifying voices. Are they the unreserved and undistorted statements of a free-thinking populace (whose natural humours seem often to have amazed onlookers) or are they the voices of a physically, imaginatively, and intellectually impoverished community who spoke out of the constant fear of a deterioration of their conditions? If the latter is understood to be the case, the charge is levelled that the eulogizing of the peasant life legitimizes the social oppression that constructs it. One can recognize here the importance of the case for the archaic lineage of the clachan; either the form is of venerable antiquity and is largely the result of self-determination, or else it appears precisely under conditions of oppression.

universalizing tendencies of industrial society.⁶³ But despite the eagerness, prepared by this oppositional culture, to hear the authentic voice of the excluded, the clachan, in many ways to become rather unjustly the symbol of Evans' Ireland, spatially remained silent. In some of the recent writing on Irish settlement history the total atrophication of the perspective of the anthropologist, as one whose effort is to represent the view from the 'inside', is notable and with that the resurgence of the unqualified notion of the clachan as abject. This is directly related to the critique of the 'northern geographers' case for the archaic lineage of the clachan, a critique under which the clusters are seen essentially as aberrations occurring at a definite historical point. The effect here, of course, is to dissolve the 'Irishness' (if we understand characteristic, widespread, and chronologically stable form by that) of the clusters, and for antiquity we are instead directed to the eulogized 'strong farms' of Anglo-Norman south Leinster and east Munster.

My argument is that as the Anaximander Fragment was intellectually mis-sited in an alien schema, so thinking on the morphology of the clachans has been misplaced. The inference here is that their response is to a different spectrum of criteria than that valorized by their observers, the latter being delimited by culture and interest. It seems to me then that we are involved in a hermeneutics of suspicion, inasmuch as we must interpret the interpretation that tradition gives us. We are suspicious of ideological content, its complicity with structures of power and domination and its consequent closure onto the phenomenon itself. If we are going to take the space of the clachans seriously we will have to examine the way that we think about it and, as far as we are able, dismantle ideological configurations. We would thus be involved in a discursive history which would examine the categories in view of which the clachan has been translated. The examination of the discourse on Ireland would aim to expose ideological reification by demonstrating the interplay of categorizations, their impulse and conditions of emergence, and the relationship between the apprehension and discursive construction of the other and interests. So we will recognize that the project to civilize could be understood as a duty, and the reworking of dishevelled topography into an order could gain *gravitas* by appeal to an idea of natural or cosmic order comprised of a hierarchy of elements, and thus intervention gain the quality of rectification. Such a history functions as critique inasmuch as it signals the situated nature and ideological function of the conception of order (with the corresponding debasement of the

⁶³Lewis Mumford locates the moment of modern Regionalism at 1854, with the first meeting of the Féligrigistes of Provence (Mumford, p.40).

'formless'), animates the form as a released, if inscrutable, knowledge, and directs the anthropological endeavour.

Chapter 4. Seeing the Irish World.

Several questions of importance must be confronted. Why did the spatial qualities of the Irish house clusters so pique the sensibilities of their observers, and what lay behind that reaction? In the context of Ireland, how was the concept of "order" constructed, with what was it enmeshed, and what did it enable? What challenge did the clusters, which evidently transgressed it, represent? It is clear that, whatever the origins of "clachans" and "rundale", in the 18th and 19th century documentation they are usually synonymous with the settlement and husbandry of the native Irish.¹ The lucidity with which this union was perceived situated the clusters within a forceful discourse on Ireland, turning on a dialectic of civility and barbarity, which had been developing since the 12th century. From this primary polarity a host of other dualities hung, interacting to form an economy of relegation; humanity and bestiality, knowledge and ignorance, reason and unreason, order and disorder, health and disease, sexual correctness and sexual transgression, the urban and the rural, the arable and the pastoral, the industrious and the idle, the agency of God's will and the locus of his displeasure. By spacing the two cultures these opposites imparted an apparent internal coherence to each culture on the field of engagement and established the image of Ireland as one of those co-ordinates around which England charted its conception of itself. As Edward Said notes, such binary opposites are dear to both the imperialist and nationalist enterprise² and, despite occasional dissenting voices, the inevitable tendency of the discourse was to construct native Ireland as a texture to which all worldly improprieties could adhere. This amplified the self-image of English power, confirmed the correctness of English colonization and rule and the resulting social practices, and provided a ground against which the Englishman figured in glittering civil resplendence. Indeed, the complimentary nature and complicity of this discourse with imperial and colonial aspirations, the leverage that it constantly applied in certain directions, leads to the suggestion that its historical unfolding represents the development of a *technique* of seeing the native Irish.

¹So, for example, in the 1840s T.C. Foster described Menlough as "an Irish rundale village"; in 1837 the agriculturalist John Andrews cites "the old Irish system of allotment called Run-dale, under which land has been held promiscuously, in mixed and scattered patches" as the chief obstruction to the development of improved agricultural practice on a part of the Antrim estates; and in 1848 it was reported in the *Edinburgh Review* that "In Mayo and other western counties the old barbarous Irish tenure called *Rundale* (Scotch *runrigg*) still prevails, which stops short of the institution of individual property, and by making the industrious and thriving responsible for the shortcomings of the idle and improvident, effectually destroys the spring of all improvement." Brereton, p.372; T.C. Foster, p.293; John Andrews; "The Irish Crisis" in the *Edinburgh Review*, p.240.

²Said, p.xxvii.

To understand on what the responses of those individuals who first observed and described the clusters was grounded, the origins and implications of that discourse from which their adjudications sprung must be articulated. This will demonstrate that, rather than being transcendental and value-free, they are historically and culturally located and evince a certain relationship of power. I want to argue that the discourse found its definition in two periods, both notably eras of conquest and colonization.³ It was mobilized in the Anglo-Norman period when a web of fundamental inter-related concepts was set down; and during the Tudor reconquest of Ireland it was focussed, inflected and fixed in its enduring image. My intention is, by examining the textual evidence, to trace the historical development of the discourse on Ireland, with particular reference to the twelfth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The kind of issue that I want to bring out is, for example, that the idea of Ireland as disordered and thus as "improper" and in need of correction was very much part of this colonial discourse, and that this gave a prescriptive cant to the eye that surveyed the chaotic habitations of the native Irish; and furthermore that this disorderliness always exuded a subversive aroma precisely because they excluded the space of the observer who tried to make sense of them. The institutions of control embodied in the zenithal organizing eye were missing. Typologically, the house clusters were not spaces of domination, colonization's spatial correlate.

What is at issue in the English (and English-centred) descriptions of Ireland is not the question of the veracity of the reports, whether or not they "correctly represented" the Irish world, but rather the inflections and orientations apparent in the textual material itself. For it was those reports produced by observers of the Irish scene and written to inform, advise, empower, provoke, amuse, upset or terrify the people back home (home being the 'English world') or to legitimize the actions of their state, that nourished the tradition of a way of thinking about the Irish and galvanized institutional attitudes toward them. A key motivation was the desire to present the exotic, the bizarre, the squalid, and the savage, themes which ran concurrently with eulogies on the riches of the country, and advice for its reform. By the time of the text attributed to Edward Ward, a gallery of characteristics of the Irish is so firmly in place to be played to and enjoyed that the author can highly confidently and self-consciously assume popular appeal by producing a grottesque litany of

³"Conquest and colonization" is inevitably a troublesome phrase when dealing with the entry of the Anglo-Normans into Ireland. Their arrival as allies of an Irish faction (the claim of Diarmait Mac Murchada), their marriages, and their semi-autonomy from the English king (reined in by Henry II's arrival in 1171) must be weighed up against the totalizing terms of the papal grant to Henry, their knowledge from the outset that they came to settle and their subsequent vigour in acquiring territory, their self-consciousness regarding their race and the possibility that it would one day rule the entire kingdom (Martin, p.45), and evident reservations about the character of Diarmait (Martin, p.46).

squalor, ignorance, and backwardness. Of importance is not just the way that Ireland was described, but the manner in which it was internalized within the dominant culture's conception of itself. Under the motive force of England's discourse, Ireland came to rest in a particular position in the English pantheon; devoid of actuality, it became a metaphor which accepted an array of assignments which still resonate today.

While, unsurprisingly, in the context of the colonial enterprise the discourse developed in a decidedly pejorative tone, to leave unacknowledged the slippery nature of the image of Ireland would be to caricature the situation. Certain problems of resolution and designation within the discourse remained one of the most enduring challenges and uncomfortable problems for the English agent in Ireland, and ensured that he was haunted by a strange eroticism which inhabited the interstice between the country's hatefulness and its provocative appeal. R.F. Foster writes: "These were the attitudes that presented English observers with a constant conundrum. How could the Irish be both savage and subtle? Both warlike and lazy? At once evidently 'inferior', yet possessed of an ungovernable pride? Cowardly, yet of legendary fortitude in the face of death? Socially primitive, but capable of complex litigation?"⁴ Enduring symbols of this eroticism and of Ireland's insidious challenge to institutional culture were the "degenerate" Old English, the Anglo-Normans who had cast aside all trappings of their civility and had submerged themselves in the Gaelic world as if, to use Stanihurst's memorable phrase, "...they had tasted of Circes poisoned cup."⁵ Within twenty years of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland Gerald of Wales comments on how the country taints, writing "This place finds people already accursed or makes them so."⁶ Spenser too signals the dissembling power of Ireland, significantly in the context of an interpretative conflict, when he has Eudoxus exclaim "Lord, how quickly doth that country alter men's natures!" and Irenus reply that it is not the nature of the country, "...but the bad minds of men...". Indeed the phrase "Ipsis Hibernicus hiberniores", first said of the Old English, was universalized to become a proverb.⁷ Can we here locate the origin of that perennial fear of the northern empire builder - that of going native, of losing reason itself? While discoursing on Mountjoy's ideas for a series of new colonies after the suppression of Tyrone's rebellion, Fynes Moryson notes that "great care was thought fit to be taken that these new colonies should consist of such men as were most unlike to fall to the barbarous customs of the Irish, or the Popish superstition of Irish and English-Irish, so as no less cautions

⁴R.F. Foster, 1989, p.25.

⁵Stanihurst, p.45.

⁶Gerald, 1982, p.109.

⁷Spenser, p.192-3.

were to be observed for uniting them and keeping them from mixing with the other than if these new colonies were to be led to inhabit among the barbarous Indians."⁸

Although the recognition of cultural difference played a vast role in England's thinking about Ireland, there existed a strand of Tudor thought which presented an unidealistic, developmental view of human nature in which the Irish were seen not as being indelibly cast by race in their observable forms, but rather were capable of being shepherded into the fold of civility. While we are probably justified in reading Englishness for civility⁹, this incorrectly translates how this strand of thought framed the situation. Civility may have been a condition exemplified by the English, but it was, to some minds anyway, something attained by them and not simply theirs' by right. Civility and Englishness were not necessarily correlates - Spenser writes that "...it is but even the other day since England grew civil"¹⁰, while Sir Thomas Smith characteristically identified the Romans as the catalyst of civilization. In a letter to Fitzwilliam, Elizabeth's lord deputy, he wrote that "England was as uncivil as Ireland until colonies of Romans brought their laws and orders ...".¹¹ This said, it is important to see England's engagement with Ireland not simply as a confrontation between historic cultural groups, but to recognize England as an agent of forces of capital accumulation, rationality, and modernization that were exerting themselves inexorably throughout Europe.

While the notion of a tradition of thought which bears a complex of linguistic practices and the possibility of some sort of explication of that is central to my argument, there are of course associated problems. The perception of a tradition's existence is always a product of the historiographic impulse; paths of influence and similarities of practices, procedures, products, locations, and subjects of enquiry, which allow us the notion of a tradition, do not exist until they are recognized as such by the assembler of history. This being so, any claim as to what constitutes an identified tradition (that is, its definition), and even that that tradition can be properly said to exist, will always be contingent as it will rest on the particular interpretations of an individual or group. The claim will always be propositional, undecideable, and subject to renegotiation and reconstruction from the perspective of

⁸Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.298

⁹Moryson, for instance, writing of the gaelicized Old English, wearily comments that "they abhor from all things that agree with English civility"; Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.263.

¹⁰Spenser, p.105.

¹¹18th November, 1572- Fitzwilliam papers, Bodleian Library Carte Ms 57, f.435; cited in Quinn, 1945. William Camden concurred; "For wheresoever the Romans were victors, they brought them who they conquered to civilitie: neither verily in any place else throughout Europe was there any civilitie, learning and elegance, but where they ruled. And very inconsiderately also they seeme to have neglected this Island" (Camden, p.66).

the present. The trouble with attempting to explicate a tradition, with judging its characteristic forms or direction, is that one is immediately involved in a purification of the field of historic event, glossing the inevitable voices which diverge from the main thrust of the discourse, thus, in the text produced, legitimizing one's own interpretation while editing out the resources for criticism.¹² While there is no ground on which to stand which outlives this problem, the way forward would seem to involve the maintenance of a vigilance and sensitivity to the voices which contest and dissent, and a recognition that they present a particular challenge to an established view on account of their isolation. Any rigorous account of a tradition would thus track them carefully noting how they inflect the direction of the discourse.

¹²Edward Said is, I think, dealing with an analogous point when he writes of ideas of nationality and race as only existing through, in effect, a tradition of thought: "If you know in advance that the African or Iranian or Chinese or Jewish or German experience is fundamentally integral, coherent, separate, and therefore comprehensible only to Africans, Iranians, Chinese, Jews or Germans, you first of all posit as essential something which, I believe, is both historically created and the result of interpretation - namely the existence of Africanness, Jewishness, or Germanness, or for that matter Orientalism and Occidentalism. And second, you are likely as a consequence to defend the essence or experience itself rather than promote full knowledge of it and its entanglements and dependencies on other knowledges. As a result, you will demote the different experience of others to a lesser status."

b. *Gerald of Wales*

Strong claims can be made that the categories and materials which dominate subsequent constructions of Ireland and the Irish first forcefully and comprehensively occur in Gerald of Wales' first work "The History and Topography of Ireland" (*Topographia Hibernica*). It seems to have been completed by 1188 after, according to the author, 3 years' labour, and received almost immediate commendation by Baldwin of Ford, Archbishop of Canterbury, who read it in installments during his peregrination with Gerald through Wales that year, preaching the crusades.¹³ Gerald indicates that the work had already been popularized by this time, and soon after he recited the text over three days at Oxford. Enthused by success he set about elaborating the document producing a second recension before Henry II's death in 1189 and, by Gerald's own death in 1223, 4 recensions had been issued. The work remained popular throughout the medieval period and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was still being discussed and copies were being made.¹⁴ John Gillingham writes: "The writer who did more than any other single individual to establish the standard English view of Ireland and the Irish was Gerald of Wales" and contends that "In essence everything that sixteenth century Englishmen believed about Ireland.." can already be found in his writing.¹⁵

Gerald's special significance here lies in the manner in which, in his hands, certain prevailing attitudes were supplemented with original material and articulated in his text in a complex of categorizations. Gillingham argues that his views on Ireland came to be so influential "not because he was saying something completely new but because he was giving precision and depth to prejudices which were already in the process of being formed."¹⁶ Certainly Ireland had been subject to observation and criticism before Gerald, most notably from within the church concerning Irish marriage customs. There are records of such comments going back to the sixth century. In the late eleventh century, Lanfranc and Anselm, both archbishops of Canterbury, had written letters to Irish kings on this subject. "Lanfranc's and Anselm's letters portrayed Irish marriage habits as wilful and lacking in normal principles of order, either legal (*contra canonicam prohibitionem*), rational (*sine omni ratione*), or natural (*uxores...uxoribus...commutant sicut...equum equo*)."¹⁷ The tendency of these perceptions was to underwrite and legitimize

¹³Dimock, p.1 - li.

¹⁴Gerald, 1982, p.17; Gillingham, p.18.

¹⁵Gillingham, p.18.

¹⁶ibid, p.22.

¹⁷Bartlett, p.44.

conquest of the island. In the famous papal bull (*Laudabiliter*, 1155) granting Ireland to Henry II, the English Pope Adrian IV praised the king's intention to "...proclaim the truths of the Christian religion to a rude and ignorant people, and to root out the growths of vice from the field of the Lord"¹⁸, while a letter of 1172 from Pope Alexander III commended Henry for having triumphed over that people of Ireland "...a race uncivilized and undisciplined..." who "...ignoring the fear of God, in unbridled fashion at random wander through the streets of vice...".¹⁹ The Anglo-Normans looked with particular interest to the potential of the land lying unexploited by its unworthy inhabitants. William of Newburgh writes "...the soil of Ireland would be fertile, if it did not lack the industry of a good husbandman; but the people are rough and barbarous in their ways ... and lazy in agriculture" while William of Malmesbury commented "The soil of Ireland produces nothing good, because of the poverty or, rather, the ignorance of the cultivators, but engenders a rural, dirty crowd of Irishmen outside the cities; the English and French, on the other hand, inhabit commercial cities and have a more civilized way of life".²⁰ A certain level of cognizance of, and comment on, Ireland were not rare. Gerald's distinction is that he moves beyond generalizing recirculated description to a level of observation and detail of reportage that was unheard of. In so doing he effectively re-invented the ethnographic monograph without knowledge of classical precedent²¹ and thereby realized a systematic presentation of a "national culture" and its particular traits. In the chemistry of Gerald's prose an image of Ireland clarified which set forth an entire world inter-relating land, climate, beasts, and humans and their practices. In the *Topographia's* dedication to Henry II Gerald wrote that he brought words back from Ireland in preference to gold or hunting birds. Prophetically he continued "...I decided to send to your Highness those things rather which cannot be lost. By them I shall, through you, instruct posterity. For no age can destroy them."²²

Gerald's ethnographic work is interesting in relation to his own background. He was one quarter native Welsh, his maternal grandmother being the famous Nesta, the "Helen of Wales", daughter of Rhys ap Tewdr prince of South Wales. His mother was born of Nesta and the Norman Gerald of Windsor. From their union sprang the famous and powerful Geraldine lords who played a major part in the invasion of Ireland (1169) and were to have such consequence in its history.²³ A roll call of Gerald's brothers, nephews, uncles and cousins would

¹⁸Curtis and McDowell, p.17.

¹⁹ibid, p.20-21.

²⁰both cited in Bartlett, p.159.

²¹ibid, p.193.

²²Gerald, 1982, p.32.

²³Dimock, p.c; Bartlett, p.26.

include almost all the major figures of the early days of the invasion - fitzStephen, the fitzGerald, the Carews, Meiter fitzHenry.²⁴ It was the war following the revolt of the powerful, and by then Gaelicized, Geraldine Earl of Desmond in the Elizabethan period which laid waste to much of Munster. Their predicament was already uncannily realized in Gerald of Wales' "family epic" the "Conquest of Ireland" (*Expugnatio Hibernica*, c.1188); "In a speech put into the mouth of Maurice fitzGerald, one of the earliest Norman invaders of Ireland, Gerald expressed the dilemmas of Marcher society and, in a sense, the dilemma of all colonial societies in a nutshell: 'What can we expect? Should we hope for any help from our own race? We are in the grip of a law that just as we are Englishmen to the Irish, so we are Irish to the English ...'".²⁵ Gerald had similar problems. The distinction between Norman and Saxon, starting to be eroded in English society, was still clearly evident in the Welsh Marches. French speaking, and having a strong provincial loyalty and pride in his Marcher ancestry and the vigour of his blood, he held the "English" in contempt and disliked the Normans of Normandy. The latter, he felt, were boastful and had a predisposition toward homosexuality.²⁶ His feelings toward the native Welsh were more complex; while he could discourse freely on Welsh barbarity and advocate their extirpation and colonization of their lands, he admired the apparent egalitarianism of their clan-based pastoral society and the *libertatis hilaritas* (joyfulness of liberty) embodied in the people. To Gerald, even the lowest displayed an aristocratic independence of mind, courage, boldness of speech, and willingness to fight to maintain their country and way of life, characteristics which were in sharp contrast to the inarticulate, servile, and depressed English labouring classes.²⁷ Gerald's ambivalent nationality was used as a weapon against him by his rivals, and marked him as never to be entirely trusted by the Welsh or the English. "The result, he complained, was that 'both peoples regard me as a stranger and not one of their own ... one nation suspects me, the other hates me.'".²⁸

The later eleventh and the twelfth century is generally recognized as a period of expansion in Western Europe. A core of wealthy, technologically advanced, and relatively centralized states looked outward with acquisitive eyes, the Anglo-Normans to the Celtic fringes, the Germans to the Scandinavians to the north or to the Slavs and Magyars to the east. Survey and description by ecclesiastics, unified by the enveloping cloak of Christendom, defined

²⁴Bartlett, p.21.

²⁵*ibid*, p.18.

²⁶*ibid*, p.12.

²⁷*ibid*, p.198-199.

²⁸*ibid*, p.17.

these peoples as "barbarians". A definite onus was thus identified, a moral requirement to bring these people, for the benefit of all, under economic control and Christian supervision. It would be difficult to find a better illustration of Said's point that "Neither imperialism or colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination..."²⁹ Ireland, the "Isle of Saints", that had been a candle in the darkness had fallen under a pall in the psyche of the Church; no writer now held Ireland at a level of regard comparable to Bede. The concept of the barbarian was key, together with its attendant complex of characteristics. Listen as Gerald states: "This people is, then, a barbarous people, literally barbarous. Judged according to modern ideas, they are uncultivated, not only in the external appearance of their dress, but also in their flowing hair and beards. All their habits are the habits of barbarians. Since conventions are formed from living together in society, and since they are so removed in these distant parts from the ordinary world of men, as if they were in another world altogether and consequently cut off from well-behaved and law abiding people, they know only of the barbarous habits in which they were born and brought up, and embrace them as a second nature."³⁰ Here Gerald links the concept of barbarity with a series of deficiencies - a lack of progress (the people's position outside modernity), a lack of cultural and conventional development springing from a lack of experience in society (a lack of the "urban", an excess of the "rural"; a lack of the "arable", an excess of the "pastoral") and a lack of contact with the normative outside world. Can we also catch overtones of a lack of humanity, of being beast-like, in the reference to "flowing hair and beards" and the sense that Ireland is beyond "the ordinary world of men"? The idea of the barbarian, particularly with reference to its association with paganism, seems to have had real effect on the battlefield. The rules of war applicable between opponents who recognized that they were of the same social class did not apply to conflict with the barbarian races - to a certain extent, normative ethical restraints dissolved in engagement with pagans or semi-pagans³¹. This is probably more apparent in the, at times hysterical, violence of the Elizabethan period. Still, Gerald comments on the difference between French and Celtic warfare; the former directed itself toward the, from the perspective of the labouring classes, more abstract concerns of political and economic control - while the latter embodied an ethnic dimension and to fall to the invaders might mean the replacement of the native populace. In the *Expugnatio* he writes that French warfare "is very different from

²⁹Said, p 8.

³⁰Gerald, 1982, p.103.

³¹Gillingham, p.19.

Welsh and Irish warfare ... In France soldiers are captured; here they are beheaded. There they are ransomed; here they are killed."³²

At the outset of the *Topographia*, Gerald signals Ireland as peripheral, as an edge condition, and hence prone to deviance from the natural and the true. The sense is that it is a land of the grotesque, of inverted values, of parody. It is world-edging, on the boundary of knowledge, where reason is eclipsed: "...what new things, and what secret things not in accordance with her usual course had nature hidden away in the farthest western lands? For beyond those limits there is no land, nor is there any habitation either of men or beasts - but beyond the whole horizon only the ocean flows and is borne on in boundless space through its unsearchable and hidden ways." Here, nature, "sometimes tired, as it were, of the true and serious, she draws aside and goes away, and in these remote parts indulges herself in these secret and distant freaks."³³ The description of monstrous creatures was a tradition which had classical precedent in Herodotus. Robert Bartlett notes, with regard to Adam of Bremen's writings, how the degree of fantasy increases almost as a function of geographic distance. He suggests three concentric circles: the inner, our world, is self-evident and needs no representation, the second is the domain of the barbarian whose outlandishness compels description, the outermost ring is "where the principles of order dissolve and all our fears, fantasies, and projections become real."³⁴ It is the zone where the unknown is confronted in, to use Aby Warburg's notion, phobic projection.³⁵ In Bartlett's schema, Ireland straddles the boundaries of the outermost rings, a prism in which the true course of nature is bent.

A recurring theme in Gerald's text is the bestiality of the Irish, their apparent deficiency of human nature.³⁶ Animal metaphors and comments on the proximity of the Irish to animals (together with the associated themes of fecundity and sensuality) were to become common place in descriptions of the Irish. Writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries commented repeatedly on the Irish peasant's practice of keeping livestock in the dwelling house, and the conjunction of pig and piggishness was often too enticing to resist. And in Spenser too we find thoughts in this vein; Eudoxus, describing Irish houses as "rather swine-

³²cited in Bartlett, p.167.

³³Gerald, 1982, p.31.

³⁴Bartlett, p.175.

³⁵Warburg; Gombrich, p.221-226.

³⁶It is notable that the achievement of the Irish which Gerald most unabashedly credits is their "incomparable skill" in musical instruments. Music has strong connections with notions of sensuality and bestiality. The idea of the ability of music to calm the savage beast is articulated in classical myth with Orpheus' charming of Cerberus. The platonic fear in which the Elizabethans held the Irish bards and musicians is not yet evident in Gerald; Gerald, 1982, p.103-104.

sties than houses" suggests that they are the "chiefest cause" of the Irishman's "so beastly manner of life and savage condition, lying and living together with his beast in one house, in one room, in one bed; that is, clean straw, or rather a foul dunghill."³⁷ Gerald gives a series of accounts of the transgression of the human - beast distinction. One narrative tells of a travelling priest and his companion who met a were-wolf and his dying partner. They were from Ossory, from which "every seven years, because of the imprecation of a certain saint, namely the abbot Natalis, two persons, a man and a woman, are compelled to go into exile not only from their territory but also from their bodily shape. They put off the form of a man completely and put on the form of a wolf. When the seven years are up, and if they have survived, two others take their place in the same way, and the first pair return to their former country and nature."³⁸ It is understood that the punishment related to resistance to Christian teaching; significantly loss of locale and of human status resulted. We are introduced to a woman of undisclosed origin who had a mane down her back, and a beard (which she wore after the Irish fashion!).³⁹ Accounts of two men, both half-oxen, introduces us to the important theme of sexual transgression, intercourse with animals being "a particular vice of that people."⁴⁰ A large lake in Ulster is identified as a flood enacted for punishment of this practice.⁴¹ This sin against God and nature indicated the irrationality of the Irish, their minds subjugated by their flesh. Telling of a relationship between a woman and a goat in Connaught, Gerald exclaims "How unworthy and unspeakable! How reason succumbs so outrageously to sensuality!"⁴² This strand reaches its denouement in the account of a ritual by which a kingship in Ulster was confirmed. Gerald baulks at the task of description, but "the austere discipline of history spares neither truth nor modesty."⁴³ He outlines an elaborate process involving a white mare, and states: "He who is to be inaugurated, not as a chief, but as a beast, not as a king, but as an outlaw has bestial intercourse with her before, professing himself to be a beast also."⁴⁴ Dimock, who has a low opinion of Gerald's knowledge of the Irish people, suggests that this tale must have been recounted by one testing Gerald's gullibility.⁴⁵ Whatever the case, it is an effective iconoclastic mechanism.

³⁷Spenser, p.122.

³⁸Gerald, 1982, p.70.

³⁹ibid, p.72-73.

⁴⁰ibid, p.73-74.

⁴¹ibid, p.64-5.

⁴²ibid, p.75.

⁴³ibid, p.110.

⁴⁴ibid.

⁴⁵Dimock, p.lxvii.

Linked to these issues was the question of Irish marriage. The late twelfth century Church, whose canonists were developing a coherent contractual theory of marriage and which elevated marriage to the status of a sacrament, looked with horror upon the fluid (although highly complex and regulated) Irish marriage arrangements. To the Church these seemed to be simply licentiousness. The native Brehon law permitted divorce, polygamy, and had no equivalent to Rome's prohibited degrees. The apparent wilfulness and casualness of Irish marriage seemed animalistic - Archbishop Lanfranc wrote that the Irish exchange wives with one another, Roger of Howden claimed that they have as many wives as they wish, and Archbishop Anselm commented that they exchange wives just as one exchanges a horse for another.⁴⁶ Gerald tells us that "This is a filthy people wallowing in vice. Of all peoples it is the least instructed in the rudiments of the faith"⁴⁷, while Bernard of Clairvaux thundered that the Irish were "shameless in their customs, uncivilized in their ways, godless in religion, barbarous in their law, obstinate as regards instruction, foul in their lives: Christians in name, pagans in fact."⁴⁸ It is clear that Ireland was a locus of God's displeasure; it was a site of incorrect and damnable practices lying before the gaze of the agents of God's will. The Irish Church was seen as both defective and impotent. Although when enumerating the "miracles of Ireland" Gerald shows reverence for the Irish saints (Kevin is "a great confessor of the faith"⁴⁹; Brigid is "glorious"⁵⁰), he later chastises the Irish prelates for their monkishness: "If the prelates from the time of Patrick through all those years had done a man's job, as they should have done, in preaching and instructing, chastising and correcting, they would have extirpated at any rate to a certain extent those abominations of the people already mentioned...".⁵¹ The saints are complicit in the semi-paganism of the people - they are all confessors and there is no martyr. "It would be difficult to find such a state of things in any other Christian kingdom."⁵² The blessing of Rome lent the enterprise of colonization the highest possible moral authority bolstering already existing "national" antipathies and solidly grounding uncertain spirits. The holy trinity of political, economic, and religious control were consubstantial.

⁴⁶Bartlett, p.170; Gillingham, p.19.

⁴⁷Gerald, 1982, p.106.

⁴⁸cited in Bartlett, p.167; Gillingham, p.19; Martin, p.60.

⁴⁹Gerald, 1982, p.77.

⁵⁰ibid, p.81.

⁵¹ibid, p.112-113.

⁵²ibid, p.113; It seems that these comments were made in a sermon which Gerald preached in retaliation to the message of the previous days' preacher. An Irish abbot, he "had denounced, and very justly as was proved, the incontinence of the English clergy, who had followed the invaders into Ireland"; Dimock, p.lxvi.

Gerald's famous comment "They are a wild and inhospitable people. They live on beasts only and live like beasts. They have not progressed at all from the primitive habits of pastoral living"⁵³ connects the bestial nature of the Irish with another series of concepts characteristic of the barbarian - the pastoral and the arable, the rural and the urban, and indolence. Here we also find Gerald's most explicit comment on the primitiveness of the Irish - their situation on the lower rungs of a ladder of civilization. The concepts contained within the following passage, Bartlett suggests, "would not be out of place in nineteenth century anthropological thought. Nor are they complete strangers in the twentieth century." Bartlett's translation puts the point more explicitly than O'Meara's: "For when the order of mankind progressed from the woods to the fields and from the fields to towns and gatherings of citizens, this people spurned the labours of farming. They viewed the treasures of the city with no ambition and refused the rights and responsibilities of civil life. Hence they did not abandon the life of woods and pastures which they had led up to then."⁵⁴ The physical movement and geographic dislocation involved in the herding of cattle is primitive, animalistic, uncultivated, and disordered. The movement from a predominantly pastoral to a predominantly arable society with its implications of land organization, enclosure, increased social coordination and regulation, concentration of capital, geographic stasis, and a surplus economy (O'Meara translates "money-making of towns"⁵⁵ for "treasures of the city") is the movement from the "rural" to the "urban" (with the corresponding development of culture that this implies), from "disorder" to "order", and a major step in the evolution from "barbarity" to "civility".⁵⁶ Directly connected to pastoralism are notions of Irish indolence and liberty. For the natives' pastoralism did not yolk them to the rigorous seasonal labour of the arable farmer; to Gerald, in their idleness, they seemed free from the call of the land and the overlord. As they did not intensely cultivate, nor plant fruit-bearing trees, so they did not extract minerals, nor, according to Gerald, devote their lives to the processing of flax or any other trade or art. "For given only to leisure, and devoted only to laziness, they think that the greatest pleasure is not to work, and the greatest wealth is to enjoy liberty."⁵⁷ The profoundly political cast of the concept of Irish idleness is to come through strongly in the Elizabethan literature; time and time again criticism of the mischief, resistance, and

⁵³Gerald, 1982, p.101.

⁵⁴Bartlett, p.176.

⁵⁵Gerald, 1982, p.102.

⁵⁶Gerald tells the story of two men from Connaught who were taken on board an English ship. They had never seen bread before, living only on meat, fish, and milk. When they asked for meat, they were told that it was Lent and that meat was disallowed. Their ignorance of bread, that crucial symbol of Christianity (and tillage), equated with their ignorance of Christianity itself and hence of civility. Civility, Christianity, and the arable were a complex sitting in opposition to barbarianism, paganism, and the pastoral.

⁵⁷Gerald, 1982, p.102.

rebelliousness of the Irish is laid at the door of their indolence, with the argument that the devil finds work for idle hands to do. Like beasts, to be productive, their idleness had to go - they had to be tamed. The phrase "thrown off their yoke" was to become a commonplace to describe a reformed Celt's disengagement from the structures of the civil world. As Spenser's suggestions will make clear, to force the natives to move from the pastoral to the arable, will be to bring them under the auspices of economic and legal control. Furthermore, indolence was a key concept through which the English considered the Irish race's right to its territory. To Gerald the fertility of the land implored cultivation; he quotes Lucan: "the fields demand, but there are no hands"⁵⁸ The idleness of the Irish was their unworthiness to people their country. It cried out to the colonist to satisfy its yearning, for its present inhabitants misused it, lacking the correct relationship with it.

There is some confusion in Gerald's view of the land of Ireland. As has already been shown, its peripheral nature makes it the site of nature's freaks, yet it is enticingly "fruitful and rich in fertile soil and plentiful harvests. Crops abound in the fields, flocks on the mountains, and wild animals in the woods."⁵⁹ Furthermore, Gerald eulogizes the healthful nature of the country, the native people being almost always healthy. And here, in a passage which sounds very much like a conflation of Biblical sources and Ovid, we catch a glimpse, despite God's displeasure with the country, of Ireland as an Eden. The site of colonization as an Eden is a theme which will reoccur in the literature proselytizing the New World. So, the health Ireland displays "...indeed was the true course of nature; but as the world began to grow old, and, as it were, began to slip into the decrepitude of old age, and to come to the end, the nature of almost all things became corrupted and changed for the worse."⁶⁰ And now the western remoteness of Ireland is healthful (and therefore true to nature's intention) for the "well of all poisons brims over in the East. The farther therefore from the East it operates, the less does it exercise the force of its natural efficacy."⁶¹ Indeed, whether by the "clemency of the air" or "some hidden force of the land itself" poison cannot endure in Ireland.⁶² This, however, returns us to the deviance of the Irish race, for while Gerald states that Irish children receive little care from their parents and marvels that nature by herself can bring them up in such beauty⁶³, he later notes that never before has he seen so many people who

⁵⁸ibid.

⁵⁹ibid, p.34.

⁶⁰ibid, p.53.

⁶¹ibid, p.56.

⁶²ibid, p.51.

⁶³ibid, p.100-101.

suffer from some natural defect. Those defects indicate a people who turn away from God. It is unsurprising that nature contravenes her laws when "...dealing with a people that is adulterous, incestuous, unlawfully conceived and born, outside the law, and shamefully abusing nature herself in spiteful and horrible practices."⁶⁴ I tend to take the root of the paradox to be the urge to show Ireland as a country whose intrinsic geographic and moral deviance confirms England's intrinsic geographic and moral centrality, while also holding out the possibility of Ireland's redemption through the enterprise of colonization and reform.

The idea of the Irish as semi-pagans articulated with the political fragmentation of the barbarian lands and accompanying internecine strife, and the notion of the Irish as disordered. Bartlett notes the link that was made between cruelty and non-Christian beliefs - paganism was equated with ferocity and warlikeness. However, he writes that the Celtic tribesman "for all his acquaintance with plundering and the blood-feud, might view French or German society, with their pogroms, massacres of heretics, punitive criminal law, and continual internal warfare, as no less cruel or ferocious than his own ... Perhaps the chief distinction between them was in the form that the violence took."⁶⁵ What, it seems, appalled the English in the violence of the pagans and barbarians, and transformed it into ferocity, was a perception that it was arbitrary, willful, irrational, disorderly. The natives were inconstant and ill-defined. Gerald tells us that "above all other peoples they always practice treachery. When they give their word to anyone, they do not keep it ... You must be more afraid of their wile than their war...".⁶⁶ Oaths and treaties meant little to the Irish: "To such an extent does one seem here to be allowed to carry out whatever one desires; people are so concerned not with what is honourable, but all of them only with what is expedient...".⁶⁷ The breaking of oaths was an important question for the English. The fragmented polity meant that Ireland lacked an equivalent to Henry II; there was no Irish king who could arrange terms which would bind all Irishmen in the same manner as Englishmen would be bound by their king's oath. Furthermore, as Spenser and Moryson⁶⁸ were to later comment on, authority in Ireland was not conveyed by primogeniture but by election. The Irish considered fealty sworn by a king to be applicable only for the period of his office. Against this background English complaints of rebellion, perjury, and faithlessness were heard. The political disunity which laid Ireland open to the invader, but which problematized

⁶⁴ibid, p.118.

⁶⁵Bartlett, p.167.

⁶⁶Gerald, 1982, p.106-107.

⁶⁷ibid, p.108-109.

⁶⁸Spenser, p.41; Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.243.

conquest, was the exemplification of irrationality and disorder; to English eyes it meant only strife, discord, and litigation. Time and time again in the Elizabethan era we hear the confident assertion that once the Irish experience the fruits and quietude of an ordered hierarchic society they will realize the wickedness of their past.

In the Tudor era we find an explosion of descriptive and survey literature as a mass of Englishmen experienced the Irish milieu for the first time since the Anglo-Norman invasion. Here, significantly, is the first deposit of an accumulation of literature through which England sought to represent Ireland to itself. These texts, re-writing, inflecting, supplementing the discourse on Ireland were wrought under the auspices of a particular array of influences - a developing sense of the unity of the state and of nationalism which had been fostered at the expense of the feudal barons, the break with Rome and a creeping fear that Ireland represented England's back door left ajar for Spanish invasion, technological innovation allowing repeatable contact with "New World" cultures, and a well-defined entrepreneurial individualism which corresponded to a royal reticence regarding state expenditure. All these were refracted through the cosmology of the age.

The world was in flux; in pursuit of wealth the European states were exposing themselves to peoples and lands very different from their own, and under the impact of confrontation long-held certainties were rocking. Within two generations of Columbus' discovery of America in 1493 the medieval world-view had been shattered; the earth had expanded by around 5,000 miles, two new continents were located, and the antipodes presented themselves to the European mind as a serious possibility. The very cosmos was unstable. Lacy Baldwin Smith presents the situation thus: "...the shape of the heavens themselves was being called in doubt. Two revolutions of concept - the outlines of the earth and the spatial image of the universe - erupted at almost the same time, and between them they destroyed the intellectual underpinnings of the past and cast Adam and all his race out of the secure Eden of a scripturally intelligible world and an anthropomorphic universe." ⁶⁹ Discovery and accumulation were partners and the expanded world lay exposed before them. Between 1577 and 1580 Drake circumnavigated the world becoming the first European to sight the west coast of Canada, and the first Englishman to sail the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the South Atlantic; and on his return the Golden Hind sailed into Plymouth Harbour with a 4,700% profit lying in its hold.

The strangeness of Ireland was experienced by the Elizabethan state in parallel with that of the Americas and to a lesser extent with the East Indies, and with West Africa which had been supplying the Portuguese with gold since the 1460's. Often those Englishmen who pursued colonizing enterprises in the

⁶⁹Baldwin Smith, p.235.

Americas with most vigour had first had experience, frequently bloody and uncompromising, in Ireland. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who was involved with schemes for colonies in Ulster and Munster⁷⁰, was appointed military governor of Munster in 1569. There he put down the revolt of that year with unprecedented harshness⁷¹; Thomas Churchyard, the pamphleteer, provides us with the image of the path to Gilbert's tent lined with the heads of the enemy that had been killed that day.⁷² Gilbert later projected schemes for a North American colony⁷³, but his most tangible success was the annexation of Newfoundland in 1583. His half brother, Walter Raleigh, within months of arriving in Ireland in 1580 saw similarly bloody action at Smerwick in Kerry under the command of Lord Grey of Wilton.⁷⁴ Raleigh was the sponsor of the expedition under Sir Richard Grenville (who himself, with Sir Warham St. Ledger and others, was involved in plans for a huge plantation in Munster in the late 1560's) which planted a colony on Roanoke Island in North America in 1585. Hand in hand with expansion and colonization went encounter, observation, and documentation. The compilation of literature recording the novel, exotic, and outlandish permitted discussion, comparison, and assessment. In 1581, attached to his text "The Image of Irelande", John Derricke published a series of plates entitled "A Notable Discovery most liuely describing the state and condition of the Wilde men in Ireland ...".⁷⁵ Only a few years later John White, one of Raleigh's colonists, produced a series of sketches of the native Americans and their habitat on which the engravings illustrating Thomas Hariot's "Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia" would be based. It seems that after the Roanoke settlers returned to Britain with Drake in 1586, some of them may have become principal tenants on the main estate in Munster of Raleigh who, exceptionally, had been granted 42,000 acres of land for plantation.⁷⁶ White himself acted as governor of Raleigh's second "lost" colony in Roanoke before retiring to Ireland. Raleigh too was publishing; in 1597 came "The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a Relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa" which included descriptions of the Amazons and the Ewaipanoma, a nation of headless people living on a branch of the Caroni river. This was an account of his journey of 1585 up the Orinocco River in Guiana in search of the legendary city of gold, and was description which sought to precipitate investment for a further expedition, Raleigh's compulsion.

⁷⁰Quinn, 1945, p.545.

⁷¹Canny, p.582.

⁷²Churchyard.

⁷³Quinn, 1940.

⁷⁴Lacey, p.37.

⁷⁵Derricke.

⁷⁶Loeber, p.50-51.

deductive reasoning from first principles of the Scholastic tradition, he diverged from them in several important points. They had no interest in analytically developing knowledge of the world; for them it was at most an object of beauty, a setting for humanity, while for Bacon it was material which through knowledge of causes could be manipulated to produce effects to the benefit of man (Bacon's curiously termed "natural magic").⁸⁰ Lacy Baldwin Smith identifies the consequence of Bacon's conception, the idea of the universe as a kingdom to be conquered and ruled by man's intelligence, as the ultimate heresy of the age. "The destiny of man, said Francis Bacon, was 'to extend the power and dominion of the human race over the universe.'"⁸¹ A consequence of Humanism is the idea that techniques of inquiry into the natural world cannot, properly, be applied to human beings. Special approaches have to be found. Bacon opposed this view situating human philosophy beside natural philosophy and claiming that his inductive method was applicable to both domains.⁸² The scepticism which freed Bacon from the Aristotelian tradition stops short, before the question of sense experience, of a general intellectual pessimism. While he noted that the senses could deceive, he believed that certainty could be achieved if sense experience could be marshalled by the correct methodical and rigorous procedure. Upon this Bacon would found his eliminative inductive technique which envisaged the slow development of increasingly wide generalizations through a methodical testing of observed evidence. Crucial was his recognition of the primacy of the negative instance, the realization that the generality of a proposition founders on the discovery of the first example which contravenes it.

Friedrich Heer has put forward the following
perceptive, if overstated, thesis: "Bacon was possessed by the hunger for power, possession, honour and influence. He wanted to hold the world in the palm of his hand. His drive to power made him the natural advocate of the inductive method and of an oppressive colonial and scientific policy. The inductive thought of Bacon was England's answer to Spain. The Spaniards were determined to master the evil world from above through monasteries, castles and fortresses. They thought deductively in the Aristotelian-Platonic tradition of old Europe. Bacon's inductive thinking exploited the naked world from below. This induction represented the transference of discovery, of mercantile exploitation and the opening up of colonial, unknown lands

⁸⁰Related to this is Bacon's conception of the ancients as children which is consequent to his idea of knowledge as cumulative, that it is a matter of amassing rather than conserving. Like children they were without history, were given to verbosity, and were incapable of producing effects. Of them he writes: "Assuredly they have that which is characteristic of boys; they are prompt to prattle, but cannot generate; for their wisdom abounds in words but is barren of works." The "ancient world" proper was, for Bacon, the present and not the distant past; Bacon, "New Organon", p.73.

⁸¹Smith, p.256.

⁸²Quinton, p.13.

(and things) to philosophy and science. The earth was a colony of English lords."⁸³ Bacon had involved himself both with Ireland, and with theories of colonization. He had encouraged the Earl of Essex's disastrous expedition to Ireland in 1599, and had rhetorically pulverized Irish laws between the jaws of a vice both inducing from accepted legal practices in most countries of Western Europe and deducing from Scripture that they were against the laws of all civilized communities and of nature.⁸⁴ In his essays he dealt with colonial plantations⁸⁵ providing advice on equipping a colonizing party. It is appropriate that the Utopian scientific community which Bacon outlined in the "New Atlantis" exists on an island lying in uncharted seas and that the tale is couched in the manner of one of the "books of discovery" of the day.⁸⁶ "And it came to pass that the next day about evening, we saw within a kenning before us, towards the north, as it were thick clouds, which did put us in some hope of land; knowing how that part of the South Sea was utterly unknown; and might have islands or continents, that hitherto were not come to light."⁸⁷ In New Atlantis the religious hierarchy of the old world has been displaced by one of scientific investigators. Heer comments that this was "a new world-empire whose goal was knowledge of the laws of nature and the extension of human mastery of the world This was no mere Royal Society or Academy. The citizen of New Atlantis was a sketch of the ideal explorer and colonialist."⁸⁸

In a speech delivered by Bacon in 1617, he set out the moral imperative which compelled England to refashion its obstinate neighbour. It was, indeed, England's destiny, at this historic juncture, to incorporate Ireland within the pale of civility which encompassed all other parts of Europe. This European unity was recognized across national antipathies; Ireland's alterity offered a more insidious challenge than national conflict for its umbra eclipsed order and reason. "Ireland is the last of the daughters of Europe which hath been reclaimed from desolation and a desert (in many parts) to population and plantation; and from savage and barbarous customs to humanity and civility. This is the King's work in chief. It is his garland of heroical virtue and felicity, denied to his progenitors and reserved to his times."⁸⁹ In Bacon's pronouncement, two complexes lie in opposition- desolation, desert, barbarity, and population, plantation, civility. The kernel of this opposition is the

⁸³Heer, p.357.

⁸⁴Kocher, p.187-188.

⁸⁵Bacon, Essays, p.95.

⁸⁶Vickers, p.26.

⁸⁷Bacon, "New Atlantis", p.129.

⁸⁸Heer, p.358.

⁸⁹"The speech used by Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, to Sir William Jones, upon his calling to be Lord Chief Justice of Ireland" in Maxwell, p.273.

perception, already noted in Gerald of Wales, of the "wastedness" of Ireland. Intellectually this rests upon a view which separates the native from his territory, thus allowing the notion of the land as a repository of commodities which seeks to provide but is refused, which despises its inhabitants, and which is put in pain by them. But in the Elizabethan texts, for the first time, "wastedness" gravitates toward waste, desolation, desert, and plans of colonization are projected onto a topography in which the texture of native forms of organization is of decreasing visibility.

For Tudor observers the land of Ireland was a beguiling prospect, and commentators unfailingly assessed its riches. William Camden, the antiquary, thought it a country to which nature had shown unusual grace⁹⁰, and wrote that it was "...so fruitful in soile, so rich in pastures more that credible, beset with so many woods, enriched with so many mineralls (if they were searched), watered with so many rivers, environed with so many havens, lying so fit and commodious for sailing into most wealthy countries, and thereby like to be for import and custome very profitable..."⁹¹ Moryson, like many others, reported that it was "uneven, mountainous, soft, watery, woody" and noted that in the humid climate harvests were later than in England, but that growth was luxuriant, and was sustained through the mild Irish winter.⁹² Lakes were so full of fish that fishermen feared their nets would break.⁹³ Cattle, sheep, deer, and wildfowl abounded, and the esteemed Irish horses were reported interestedly. The mountains appeared to hint at rich mineral resources. According to Richard Stanihurst "...nature seemed to have framed this countrie for the storehouse or iewelhouse of hir chiefest treasure..."⁹⁴, and Sir Thomas Smith, publicizing his projected colony in the Ards of Down, confidently invoked Biblical precedent and divine promise calling it a "...lande that floweth with milke and hony, a fertile soil truely if there be any in Europe" and asserted that all England produced, "...save fine wool..." could, given the correct reforms, "...be had also moste abundantly there."⁹⁵ This rich land was dissatisfied with its inhabitants, and here we have the perception, again already seen in Gerald, of the land imploring the colonist. Classical scholarship indicated that it had been considered a British

⁹⁰Camden, p.63.

⁹¹ibid, p.118.

⁹²Moryson, "Description", p.419.

⁹³ibid, p.418.

⁹⁴Stanihurst, p.31. Barnaby Rich, that despiser of Catholicism, considered the "Papist pens" of Gerald, Campion, and Stanihurst to be stuffed with lies. Stanihurst became a convert to Catholicism under the influence of Campion, a prominent English Jesuit. Rich apparently met Stanihurst in Antwerp, where the latter, according to Rich, was involved in the practice of alchemy. Rich's text consciously re-performs those of the earlier writers, and this is one of the points that he takes issue with; Rich, p.6.

⁹⁵Sir Thomas Smith, no pagination. Smith's pamphlet (1572), and associated documentation, was the first printed publicity for an English colonial venture, and possibly the first for any business enterprise. It was highly successful. Within six months of its publication, around 800 adventurers had enlisted; Quinn, 1945, p.551.

island by the ancients⁹⁶, Spenser wrote of the multitude "...of very good ports and havens opening upon England, as inviting us to come unto them, to see what excellent commodities that country can afford..."⁹⁷, and Gernon characterized Ireland as a maiden "...who wants a husband, she is not embraced, hedged and ditched, there is noo quicksett putt into her."⁹⁸ Spenser's Eudoxus, after having been told how the native Irish regained much of their old territory from the English at the time of the Wars of the Roses laments "I do much pity that sweet land...".⁹⁹ The notion of Irish indolence and its alignment with pastoralism and the pleasure of liberty was still operative. Normally appended to the enticing descriptions of the country was a caveat criticizing the natives' disinterest. According to Stanihurst nature "...instilleth in the inhabitants a drouste lithernesse to withdraw them from the insearching of hir houred and hidden iewels." He gives us the striking image of a laden banqueting table surrounded by guests who through some bewitchment sit paralysed and repulsed before the delicacies.¹⁰⁰ Their condition is affected, impaired; it is *incorrect*. In Camden's view the fraught coastline of Connaught invited and provoked navigation but "...the sweetnesse of inbred idlenesse doth so hang upon their lazie limbes, that they had rather get their living from doore to doore, than by honest labours keep themselves from beggery"¹⁰¹, and Moryson was appalled by the Irish fishermen, a shower "...so possessed with the natural fault of slothfulness, as no hope of gain, scarcely the fear of authority, can in many places make them come out of their houses and put to sea".¹⁰² In a thematic symphony the latter related the natural idleness of the Irish to theft, distaste for labour and manual trades, slovenly houses and clothes, a love of liberty, and a delight in music.¹⁰³

The conceptual wedge driven between inhabitant and land meant that the native could be seen as an observer of the latter rather than as an actor upon it. The manner in which the natives drew upon their habitat was unrecognized as a basis for correct possession or ownership of the land. Literally unrecognized was their topographic imprint, the land apparently unmarked and unenclosed. The natives did not intellectually and systematically affect the land, and it could therefore be seen as unclaimed, as waste, as a desert, as *terranullius*. Moryson complained of the low density of population on lands held by Irish lords in which

⁹⁶Camden,p.65; Spenser, p.84. This recognition articulates with two of the five justifications Gerald gives for the lawful right of England over Ireland; Gerald, 1978, p.149.

⁹⁷Spenser, p.54.

⁹⁸Gernon, p.350.

⁹⁹Spenser, p.55.

¹⁰⁰Stanihurst, p.31.

¹⁰¹Camden, p.98.

¹⁰²Moryson, "Description", p.423.

¹⁰³Moryson, "Manners", p.312.

"...great parts lie waste only for want of tenants."¹⁰⁴ And this must have held particularly well for the North of Ireland, where traditions of pastoralism appear to have been strongest. The perception of native land as waste and as therefore unowned and open to appropriation was to become a recurring motif in New World encounters, and has left a tenacious legacy.¹⁰⁵ It is in Sir Thomas Smith's pamphlet of 1572 that ideas of Irish land as "empty" and as "waste" are first articulated into a justification for colonization, although there was famous intellectual precedent.¹⁰⁶ Smith, Elizabeth's Principal Secretary, was a man of impressive intellectual range. His investigations ranged across the domains of law, natural science, economic history, and the history of orthography. But most of all it was his classical scholarship, and his corresponding assurance that he was moving in accord with classical precedent, that dominated his thinking about his colonial enterprise. When requesting Fitzwilliam, Elizabeth's Lord Deputy, to make out a commission for him, he asked that it should be as a 'colonel' for "Here it betokeneth a leader forth of men to inhabit and till waste and desolate places who in ancient time were called Deductores Coloniarum, and the action was called deducere coloniam."¹⁰⁷ (We note here the sense of deduction as bringing down from above, as arriving at a position from a starting point of axiomatic first principles, as opposed to moving upward from 'below' in the manner of induction). In his pamphlet Sir Thomas argues that England has never before been more overcrowded than at this time. The dissolution of the monasteries has meant both an increase in marriages and population and that they are no longer available to shelter the younger brothers to whom primogeniture has denied a sizeable inheritance. New land is needed to receive England's seed! France and Spain would offer too powerful resistance but "Ireland is the Queenes inheritaunce,

¹⁰⁴Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.242.

¹⁰⁵In 1971, a claim to ownership of ancestral land was brought to an Australian court by a group of Aborigines. It was ruled that they "did not, according to British and later Australian law, own this land. To own it, one had not only to have some formal title: one also had to work it, to use it. Property required the union of land and labour....The judgement...was that the Aborigines 'have a more cogent feeling of obligation to the land than of ownership of it'; and, in a celebrated phrase, 'it seems easier on the evidence to say that the clan belongs to the land than that the land belongs to the clan.'"; Jones, p.184. There is clear evidence the identification of the Irish tribal group with its lands was strong - "...some kings ritually 'wedded' their domains, like Venetian doges."; Foster, p.9. In Fermanagh in 1607, Sir John Davies experienced considerable difficulty in prying a intricate manuscript from an elderly Brehon which gave precise details of land holdings and exactions; "A letter from Sir John Davies, Attorney-General of Ireland, to Robert Earl of Salisbury" in Maxwell, p.328.

¹⁰⁶Morgan, p.270. In 1516 Thomas More published 'Utopia' in Louvain. Utopia itself was an island on which a number of cities were founded, each bearing a maximum number of households of 6,000. If the population of the entire island exceeded the quota, a colonizing party was to be composed from the citizens of every city, and a colony established under Utopian laws on the mainland closeby. (Even at this date, prior to the dissolution of the monasteries, poverty and unemployment was affecting England, and Europe in general). The natives of the mainland were to be allowed to inhabit the colony if they submitted themselves to Utopian law; hence the nations would become mingled. However "... if the natives will not join in living under their laws, the Utopians drive them out of the land they claim for themselves, and if they resist make war on them. The Utopians say it's perfectly justifiable to make war on people who leave their land idle and waste, yet forbid the use of it to others who, by the law of nature, ought to be supported from it" (More, p.41).

¹⁰⁷17th July, 1572- Fitzwilliam papers, Bodleian Library Carte Ms 57, f.38; cited in Quinn, 1945, p.547.

many countreis there, as that which I demand, given to hir by acte of Parliament of the same realme, others hirs by dissente, the which lye almoiste desolate: To inhabite and reforme so barbarous a nation as that is and to bring them to the knoweledge and lawe, were both a godly and commendable deede, and a sufficient worke for our age. All those things happening together in my time, when I had considered, i judged surely, that God did make apte and prepare this nation for such a purpose. There resteth only to persuade the multitude already destined therto, with will and desire t take the matter in hand."¹⁰⁸

The indolence exemplified by the natives' pastoralism, the distaste for tillage, and the aristocratic military, literary, and musical classes was of urgent political concern to the English. Spenser, like others, complained that most of the Irish could, through bardic sources, derive themselves from the captain of a sept, thus considering themselves gentlemen, and scorning "...to work or use any hard labour which he saith is the life of a peasant or churl."¹⁰⁹ The haughtiness of the apparently most base Irishman was infamous. Stanihurst reported that "...the Irish man considers himself a gentleman and all Englishmen, planted or otherwise, as churles..."¹¹⁰ and that because of their scrupulous husbandry inhabitants of part of the English pale had been nicknamed "...for their continuall drudgerie, Collones, of the Latine word Coloni, whereunto the clipt English word clowne seemeth to be answerable."¹¹¹ Tillage was cognate with civility; its geographic stability permitted regulation, law enforcement, order, the growth of commerce, and the reliable receipt of rent and other exactions. It held a pivotal role in Sir Thomas Smith's colonial theory - "Nothing" he wrote firmly 'doth more people the country with men, maketh men more civil, nor bringeth commodities to the sustenance of men than the plough"¹¹², and in his pamphlet stated that the civility of the north of Ireland would increase more "...by keeping men occupied in Tyllage, than by idle following of heards, as the Tartarians, Arabians, and Irishe men do..."¹¹³. Sir Thomas was confident that the colonists would retain and even attract the Irish servile class (the "churles") upon whose labour the colony would be raised; they were to be taught English but racial difference was recognized in a range of restrictions which would effectively seal them in their class position. In the Elizabethan texts, Irish idleness, a moral question in Gerald's *Topographia*, takes on the additional question of an administrative problem. At the end of the last war, Moryson writes, when it was

¹⁰⁸Sir Thomas Smith, no pagination.

¹⁰⁹Spenser, p.185-6.

¹¹⁰Stanihurst, p.44.

¹¹¹ibid, p.10.

¹¹²Dewar, p.166.

¹¹³Sir Thomas Smith, no pagination.

hoped that the Irish would be drawn to tillage, they instead embraced pastoralism "...as suitable to their innate sloth, and as most fit to elude or protract all execution of justice against them, while they commonly lived in thick woods abounding with grass."¹¹⁴ The "out-villages"¹¹⁵ and the "boolies"¹¹⁶, settlements erected on pasturing grounds, were analysed by Spenser as being beyond the law, as sites of relief for robbers and outlaws. "Moreover, the people that thus live in those boolies grow thereby the more barbarous and live more liceniously than they could in towns, using what manners they list and practising what mischiefs and villanies they will, either against the government there by their combinations, or against private men, whom they malign by stealing their goods or murdering themselves; for there they think themselves half-exempted from law and obedience, and having tasted freedom do, like a steer that hath been long out of his yoke, grudge and repine ever after to come under rule again."¹¹⁷ Herding, for Spenser, was the mark of a barbarous, uncivil, and warlike people, and he pointed out that a result of the enclosure of land would be to order the landscape, defining passages of encounter in which the enemy could be engaged.¹¹⁸

In these documents we are never far from the theme of the Irish as beasts, as un-human, without tillage, urbanity, culture, already noted in the *Topographia*. As an animal harnessed is marked with civility, so Irish liberty was that of the un-yoked beast. Their military strength lay in the wilds, in bog, wood, and mountain pass, and the plain, the road, and the bridge was each an anathema. The native was close to the beast, wandering with it, sleeping with it, drinking its blood, eating whitemeats. It was known that the Irish "...had an art to catch stags by singing to them a certain tune upon all sides about them, by which measure they fall down and lay as sleeping"¹¹⁹ and that certain women ("witches" to Camden) had the ability to charm milk from dry cows.¹²⁰ John Good's account of "...those uncivill and meere Irish, that lie shrowded in the utmost coasts..."¹²¹ recounts that they "...take unto them Wolves to be their God-sibs..." and tells of powers over horses and charms whispered in their ears.¹²² The native appetite for green shoots was noted¹²³, and Moryson observed that "They willingly eat the herb Shamrock, being of a sharp taste,

¹¹⁴Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.250.

¹¹⁵Spenser, p.140.

¹¹⁶Spenser, p.87.

¹¹⁷ibid, p.199.

¹¹⁸ibid, p.122-3.

¹¹⁹Moryson, "Manners", p.323.

¹²⁰Moryson, "Description", p.429; "Commonwealth", p.301; Camden, p.145.

¹²¹Camden, p.142.

¹²²ibid, p.146.

¹²³Campion, p.18; Camden, p.147. Camden tells us that Strabo termed the Irish "eaters of herbs".

which, as they run and are chased to and fro, they snatch like beasts out of the ditches."¹²⁴ Animal metaphors were rife - Irish communality was bestial ("...the wild Irish, as unreasonable beasts, lived without any knowledge of God or good manners, in common of their goods, cattle, women, children and every other thing..."¹²⁵), as was their huntedness ("...naked rogues in woods and bogs, whom hounds can scarce follow ... It is no more possible to defeat them at once, than to destroy so many wolves and foxes...they having dens, coverts and labyrinths inextricable, for their succours."¹²⁶), as were their habitations ("...these wild Irish are not much unlike to wild beasts, in whose caves a beast passing that way might perhaps find meat, but not without danger to be ill entertained, perhaps devoured, of his insatiable host"¹²⁷). Edward Ward's populist and self-confessedly defamatory pamphlet of 1699 contains a litany of bestial points from the Irish inhabitation of land ("...they are a wild Herd of brute Animals inhabiting, but not improving it."¹²⁸) to their food¹²⁹, their birth to servitude¹³⁰, and their fecundity ("...each little Hutt being as full of Children, as a Conney-Burrough in a well stock'd Warren is of Rabbits."¹³¹). Moryson, typically, had already commented on the generative powers of the Irish¹³², and had noted the associated bestial trait of luxuriousness describing how the natives feasted on an abundance of meats and were excessively given to drunkenness.¹³³

Marina Warner observes that, in myth, cannibalism often figures alongside incest. Both are transgressive because they entail an incapacity to recognize the nature of oneself and another: "...cannibals fail to see their prey as their kind and this is an act which effectively exiles them from humanity."¹³⁴ This is the sign of the beast as the self-consciousness which allows a recognition of both the communality of human being and the difference of that condition from all else is missing; the condition of humanity dissolves with its apprehension. Certainly the sort of criticisms which, as we have seen, were from an early date levelled at Irish

¹²⁴Moryson, "Description", p.427.

¹²⁵from William Thomas. *The Pilgrim: A Dialogue on the Life and Actions of King Henry VIII (1552)* in Maxwell, p.117.

¹²⁶from "Minute of the most gross error, long since committed and still continued, in the Wars of Ireland, and the way to redress the same, briefly declared" (1599) in Maxwell, p.219.

¹²⁷Moryson, "Description", p.430.

¹²⁸Ward, p.4.

¹²⁹ibid, p.9.

¹³⁰ibid, p.8.

¹³¹ibid, p.5.

¹³²Moryson, "Manners", p.315.

¹³³Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.249.

¹³⁴Warner, p.69-70.

marriage practices continued to be current.¹³⁵ But supplementing this the new writing on Ireland presented classical commentaries, and compared observed ethnographic traits with the characteristics of the racial groups from which it was thought the natives derived. Campion and Camden quoted Strabo on the cannibalism of the Irish, Solinus on the drinking of slain enemies' blood and the marking of the face with it, and cited ancestral Scythian precedent.¹³⁶ Spenser thought the drinking and face-smearing Gaulish, but witnessed only an old woman drinking her foster-son's blood, a rebel executed for treason, "...saying that the earth was not worthy to drink it...".¹³⁷

The rural was the locational counterpart to the lawless, beastly, idle, and pastoral characteristics of those Irish who remained untouched by civility, while the urban was civil and English. The town was necessarily the characteristic object of Irish military activity; Spenser tells us that, after the English exodus precipitated by the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, the rebel Murrogh en Ranagh O'Brien overran Munster and Connaught "...defacing and utterly subverting all corporate towns that were not strongly walled."¹³⁸ In 1567 Sidney, Elizabeth's Lord Deputy, reported to the Queen that the towns were "...the only monument of obedience and nurseries of civility in this country."¹³⁹ The cardinal point of Sir Thomas Smith's schemes for the Ards was a fortress city erected in imitation of classical models of colonization as a civil implant in barbarian soil; and he was amazed to find that his son, who was to lead the colonizing party, omitted reference to it in proposals that he submitted to his father.¹⁴⁰ The visibility and permanence of the town was attractive to the Elizabethans. Moryson held that the building of a fine house was the sign of a heart faithful to the state¹⁴¹ while Bacon argued that "...the calling of stones for building and habitation..." follows the turn to civility.¹⁴² Besides strategic and economic purposes, Spenser argued his proposal for a network of carefully located market towns on the basis that rural people going there for their needs "...will daily see and learn civil manners of the better sort."¹⁴³ But in 1610, the combative and opinionated Barnaby Rich proposed (in a chapter entitled "From whence it proceedeth that the Irish are sore repugnant to the English")

¹³⁵for example, Camden, p.145; Gillingham, p.18.

¹³⁶Campion, p.16; Camden, p.140.

¹³⁷Spenser, p.101.

¹³⁸ibid, p.52.

¹³⁹Loeber, p.39.

¹⁴⁰Quinn, 1945, p.547; Dewar, p.165-6.

¹⁴¹Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.286.

¹⁴²from Francis Bacon. Certain Considerations touching the Plantation in Ireland. (1608) in Maxwell, p.269.

¹⁴³Spenser, p.206.

that civility and uncivility equated not with the city and the country, but were related rather to "...the dispositions of the mind." Below, however, he maintains the equation of "remoteness" (and hence undiluted Irishness) and uncivil manners.¹⁴⁴

To English observers the disorderly and the illogical seemed to infuse all aspects of Irish life. The native legal system, presided over by the Brehons, the dignified caste of jurists whose office passed by inheritance, was highly complex and regulated, but what was witnessed and apprehended seemed to fly in the face of English ideals of structure and stability. A choir of voices sounded in outrage against it. Rulings often appeared "...contrary to all divine and human laws..."¹⁴⁵, "...repugning both to God's law and man's..."¹⁴⁶ Irish laws were the touchstone of a government that was neither "...polliticke nor cyvill, but meare tyrannicall..."¹⁴⁷ and their arbitration through a system of fines was accused of concealing theft and murder.¹⁴⁸ Sir John Davis concluded that all those who held to Brehon laws "'a lewd custom' which prevented the Irish cultivating the soil, building towns and developing trade" in contrast to "all well-ordered commonweals" must necessarily be an enemy to all good government.¹⁴⁹ This discursive destruction of the Brehon laws removes them from the status of "law" to "custom" bringing us close to the beastly again. For this is the undoing of intentionality, and takes us from the subjugation of the will by the intellect to unthinking habitual observance and wilfulness. Order comes with English conquest; Campion on religion- "...the government being hayled into contrarie factions, the Nobilitie lawlesse, the multitude wilfull, it came to passe that Religion waxed with the temporail common sort cold and feeble, until the Conquest did settle it, especiallie in cases of restraints and Discipline."¹⁵⁰ Robert Payne, however, saw fit to praise the Irish legal practice which he witnessed for its wisdom, equity, and justice.¹⁵¹ English principles of inheritance, through which lines of authority and capital were stabilized across time, stood in sharp contrast to the legal foundations of the native practices in which authority shifted through election and land holdings could be reconstructed and redivided within the tribal group. The custom of "tanistry", by which a strong man was elected to be successor to the chieftain, was criticized for the values which marked a suitable candidate and which were therefore aspired to, and for encouraging

¹⁴⁴Rich, p.14-15.

¹⁴⁵Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.273.

¹⁴⁶Spenser, p.38.

¹⁴⁷Dymmok, p.6.

¹⁴⁸Spenser, p.38; Dymmok, p.9-10.

¹⁴⁹Maxwell, p.58.

¹⁵⁰Campion, p.16.

¹⁵¹Payne, p.12.

militia to be kept (the Irish "idle men of war") who were sustained through exactions upon the labouring population.¹⁵² According to Campion and others it resulted in continual war and treason¹⁵³ and Dymmok felt that due to it "...no man is lorde of his owne any longer than he can defend yt against others."¹⁵⁴ Henry VIII's political interaction with the Irish chieftains, on his assumption of the title "King of Ireland", was problematized (as had been Henry II's), by the inability of a chief to bind his successor to an oath taken by him. Irish perjury and inconstancy were almost cliché; Spenser felt that the Irish were bent in all their dealings¹⁵⁵, Moryson pessimistically predicted that Ireland "...will always be most uncertain...as because the minds of the Irish are unstable, and as the common sort everywhere, so they in far greater measure, have most inconstant affections"¹⁵⁶, and Campion warned "Covenant and Indent with them never so warilie, never so preciselie, yet they have beene found faithlesse and perjured."¹⁵⁷ Further confusion was caused by the flexibility of marriage arrangements, the recognition of illegitimate offspring, and the custom of fostering children, a practice which gave rise to a social cohesion whose intensity astonished observers.

Disorder and inconstancy seemed to permeate the Irish; it was as if they were defined by problems of definition, a slipperiness which was itself improper. An act of 1537 for the enforcement of "English Order, Habit, and Language" stated that there "...is nothing which doth more contain and keep many of..." the King's "... subjects of this said land, in a certain savage and wild kind and manner of living, than the diversity that is betwixt them in tongue, language, order and habit..." which "...persuadeth unto them, that they should be as it were of sundry sorts...".¹⁵⁸ Moryson mused "...it is strange how contrary they are to themselves, for in apparel, meat, fashions, and customs they are most base and abject, yet they are by nature proud and disdainful of reproach." They thought it no shame to run from battle yet their courage was great. They didn't know what honour was, but sought after it more than any other race.¹⁵⁹ Going into battle they were disposed in a "...confused kind of march in heaps without any order or array...".¹⁶⁰ And Josias Bodley tells us that "...order is a fair thing and all love it, except the Irish men-at-arms, who are a most vile race of men, if it be at all allowable to call them 'men' who

¹⁵²e.g. "Report of the Earl of Sussex" (1562), Carew, p.339.

¹⁵³e.g. Campion, p.20.

¹⁵⁴Dymmok, p.6.

¹⁵⁵Spenser, p.59.

¹⁵⁶Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.238.

¹⁵⁷Campion, p.17.

¹⁵⁸Maxwell, p.113.

¹⁵⁹Moryson, "Manners", p.311.

¹⁶⁰Spenser, p.96.

Moryson disapprovingly relates the scene at an Irish death-bed. Rather than sensibly offering words "...of good counsel, for his soul's health..." the natives crowd around the bed as if they could hold back death itself: "And when the sick person draweth to the point of death, the near friends and all the company call out and cry to him, as if they would stay his soul from departing by remembering the goodness of the wife or husband and children, and the wealth and friends to be left behind him, reproaching him with unkindness in forsaking them, and asking whither and to whom he will go to be in better case than he is with them. When the sick person is dead they make a monstrous cry with shrieking, howling, and clamping of hands...".¹⁶⁹ The extent of Irish superstition was an index of barbarity; Spenser's Eudoxus comments that "...all barbarous nations are commonly great observers of ceremonies and superstitious rites"¹⁷⁰, and Bacon calls for King James to join the harp of David, casting out the evil spirit of superstition, with that of Orpheus, casting out desolation and barbarism.¹⁷¹ The infection of the Irish church with superstitious observances was noted and criticized¹⁷², and increasingly, under the pen of a commentator such as Rich, the status of Catholicism itself was transformed into "superstition". It is Good's account, printed by Camden, in which we find the most detailed description of native talismanic practices. We hear of bracelets and girdles of women's hair sent to lovers and as protection against sickness. Prayers are offered to the new moon, the future is divined using a sheep bone, and a host of observances cluster around the horse, and May Day, and the provision of food.¹⁷³ In war bagpipes are played, amulets carried, certain prayers recited, and the infamous Irish cry released when engaging the enemy - and he who gives the weakest cry is magically transported "...into a certaine vale in Kerry..." avoiding ever after the sight of men.¹⁷⁴ The Irish woman possessed enchantments against all illnesses and troubles and some could wield magical powers over the men, including inducing impotency. Good gives the following illustration of the woman's mediation between an animistic landscape and the human condition: "When any man hath caught a fall upon the ground, forthwith hee starteth up againe on his feet, and turneth himselfe round three times toward his right hand, with his sword, skeine, or knife hee diggeth into the earth, and fetcheth up a turfe, for that, they say, the earth doth yeeld a spirit: and if within some two or three

¹⁶⁹Moryson, "Manners", p.320.

¹⁷⁰Spenser, p.42.

¹⁷¹from Francis Bacon. *Certain Considerations touching the Plantation in Ireland*. (1608) in Maxwell, p.269.

¹⁷²e.g. the christening customs described by Moryson ("Manners", p.319), Campion (p.15), and Stanihurst (p.45). The latter writes that the superstitions have "...taken so deepe root in that people, as commonlie a preacher is sooner by their naughtie lives corrupted, than their naughtie lives by his preaching amended."

¹⁷³Camden p.143 (misnumbered)-146.

¹⁷⁴ibid, p.147.

daies he fell sick, there is sent a woman skilfull in that kind unto the said place, and there she saith on this wise. I call thee P. from the East and West, South and North, from the forrests, woods, rivers, meeres, the wilde wood-fayries, white, red, black etc. and with-all, bolteth out certaine short praiers: then returneth she home unto the sicke party, to try whether it be the disease called Esane, which they are of the opinion is sent by the Fairies: and whistereth a certaine odde praier with a Pater Noster into his eare, putteth some coals into a pot full of fair water, and so giveth more certain judgement of the disease, than many of our Physicians can."¹⁷⁵ In all, Stanihurst concluded that an account of their "...vaine and execrable superstitions..." would fill several volumes¹⁷⁶ and Rich that their practices evidenced "...a lightnesse of the wit, and weakenesse of the brain."¹⁷⁷

The identification of the incomer as an agent of God's will was, as we have seen, part of the consciousness of Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland. And still the lingering sense of Ireland's unorthodoxy tended, for the Roman Catholic world, to taint it while, by the end of Elizabeth's reign, an increasingly uncompromising Protestant mentality could clearly identify intractably Catholic Ireland as a locus of God's displeasure. So the English Jesuit Edmund Campion, sometime fellow of St. John's, Oxford, who was later to be hung, drawn and quartered with other Romish priests for high treason, could write in 1569 that Ireland was indebted to God for allowing it to be conquered and a process of correction begun.¹⁷⁸ Several decades later Moryson saw victory against the Irish rebels and their Spanish reinforcements at Kinsale as "...the Providence of God even miraculously protecting our religion against the papists..."¹⁷⁹, and Rich, writing for the information of the London undertakers, justified the plantation of Ulster in terms of a Protestant God's preference and the need to convert the idolatorous, superstitious Catholics¹⁸⁰. Sir Thomas Smith called his first colonizing enterprise "a godly voyage" and compared it to the movement of the Israelites, God's chosen people, into a land of milk and honey¹⁸¹ and Edward Barkley, commenting on Essex's activities against the northern Irish, wrote "...how godly a deed it is to overthrowe so wicked a race the world may judge; for my part I thinke there canot be a greater sacryfice to God."¹⁸² General criticism was levelled at the Irish clergy, the condition of places of

¹⁷⁵ibid, p.146-7.

¹⁷⁶Stanihurst, p.45

¹⁷⁷Rich, p.42.

¹⁷⁸Campion, p.10.

¹⁷⁹Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.290.

¹⁸⁰Rich, no pagination ("An Epistle to the Reader").

¹⁸¹Sir Thomas Smith no pagination.

¹⁸²cited in Canny, p.581.

worship, the natives' knowledge of religion, and, of course, the practice and observance of the sacraments. All the gifts which God and nature had bestowed were abused by the natives; the abundance of milk that flowed in resonance with Scriptural metaphor was contaminated by Irish dairying procedure making it fit for no-one but themselves¹⁸³, the Irish body, well fashioned by nature, was disfigured by Irish attire.¹⁸⁴ And ironically that attire, in some measure, protected the wearer against the anger of God provoked; under the infamously serviceable Irish mantle the outlaw "...covereth himself from the wrath of Heaven, from the offence of the earth, and from the sight of men."¹⁸⁵ Appalling was the perversity of the Irish position, their culture of savagery which infected all and left nothing unsullied, but yet which bafflingly co-existed with legendary austerity regarding certain religious observances such as fasting days. Their ingratitude to the Crown matched their ingratitude to God. The articulation between Irish ungodliness and military and political resistance is straightforward. In Rich it receives several formulations - the Irish are naturally inclined to cruelty, which is against God's will, and which is manifested in civil strife and rebellion¹⁸⁶, they "...are in nothing more repugnant then against the law of God" and where God is not known the Prince cannot be obeyed "...for it is the light and knowledge of God's word, that containeth subiects in obedience unto their Princes"¹⁸⁷, their popery is the fundamental reason why no English example can draw them, and it is a government of godly principles embodied in English rule which seeks to "reduce" the people to civility and to a "...reasonable knowledge of humane society."¹⁸⁸ The more subtle Spenser had earlier argued that civil reformation and spiritual reformation were mutually supporting and that one must accompany the other¹⁸⁹ and, in a fascinating section, had developed an analogy between the mingling of nations and the receiving of Christianity, giving the activities of encounter, conquest, and colonization from a Mediterranean core the cast of divine directive.¹⁹⁰

The confluence of all these categories returns us to the opposition between civility and barbarity. The "...rude and savage..."¹⁹¹, non-classical, nations which had anciently peopled Ireland were determined by the Elizabethan historiographers, and assessment of linguistic elements and customary observances confirmed the continuity of the contemporary Irish race with its savage

¹⁸³Rich, p.25.

¹⁸⁴ibid, p.15.

¹⁸⁵Spenser, p.90.

¹⁸⁶Rich, p.18-21.

¹⁸⁷ibid, p.33.

¹⁸⁸ibid, p.4.

¹⁸⁹Spenser, p.124.

¹⁹⁰ibid, p.82-85.

¹⁹¹ibid, p.81.

forebears.¹⁹² Indeed one eminent antiquary suggests that a unique concentration of savagery condensed in Ireland; Camden speculated that that the uncivil races of "...Spaine, Gaule, and Britaine..." withdrew to Ireland in the face of the expanding Roman Empire "...that they might shake off that intolerable yoke of Roman slaverie."¹⁹³ He thus formulates Ireland as something of a Pandora's Box into which the pre-rational chaos of the old world is compressed. He continues "But a blessed and happie time had it been for Ireland, if it had at any time been under their subjection: surely, it had then beene reduced from barbarisme to civilitie. For wheresoever the Romans were victors, they brought them whom they conquered to civilitie: neither verily in any place throughout Europe was there any civility, learning, and elegance, but where they ruled. And very inconsiderably also they seeme to have neglected this Island."¹⁹⁴ The dialectic of civility and barbarity received a geographic translation through the medium of the English Pale, an area which had become so contracted by the Tudor period that in 1515 it was described as being that area between Dublin and Trim and Dundalk, not thirty miles compass.¹⁹⁵ However subverted the distinction civil/within and uncivil/without was to become¹⁹⁶ the Pale was to remain a powerful metaphor of difference and had, by the Elizabethan period, "...begun to show affinities with the concept of a moving 'colonial' frontier."¹⁹⁷

For some, the difference between the practices of Englishman and native was articulated in the notion of Ireland as the inverse of England, as an 'anti- England'. At the outset of Spenser's "Dialogue" Ireneus frets over the apparently unreformable nature of the country. This intractability is fearful; it may indicate that God "...reserveth her in this unquiet state still for some secret scourge, which shall by her come unto England...".¹⁹⁸ The Irish language could be

¹⁹²The acoustic field of the Irish was one of the most striking indicators of their barbarity. Disconcerting as the Irish battle-cry was, it does not seem to have impressed itself as deeply into the English imagination as the uncanny wailing of the Irish woman at death-bed and grave-side. Rich felt the scene was as if a "...company of Hags or hellish Fiends, were carrying a dead body to some infernall Mansion..." (Rich, p.12). The effect of the descriptions is strikingly close to that of Synge's account of burials on the Aran Islands at the start of the twentieth century (Synge, p.50-53, 212-216). Synge, in whose literature the theme of Irish woman as tragic figure is a key element, took the scenes to be the unrestrained expressions of the awful primordial confrontation between humanity and an unrelenting world. His comment that "They are usually silent, but in the presence of death all outward show of indifference or patience is forgotten, and they shriek with pitiable despair before the horror of the fate to which they all are doomed" (Synge, p.52) resonates with Spenser's assessment that grave-side wailing has always been the manner of pagans as it betokens those with no hope of salvation (Spenser, p.94).

¹⁹³Camden, p.65.

¹⁹⁴ibid, p.66.

¹⁹⁵"The decay of Ireland written by Patrick Finglas, one of the Barons of the Exchequer in Ireland, in the year of Henry VIII" (1515), Carew, p.3.

¹⁹⁶Opinions on this could vary with the background of the commentator. Stanihurst, himself a product of the Pale, presents us with an image of unbroken civility the Pale dwellers "...being therefore as mortallie behated of the Irish, as those that are borne in England" (p.44). Campion however, writing earlier, tells of uncivil Irish within the Pale (p.5).

¹⁹⁷J.H. Andrews, p.182.

¹⁹⁸Spenser, p.35.

seen as a strange inversion of English; it was said that, in the past, if an Irishman came to Wexford and spoke English he would be told "...forthwith to turn the other end of his toong and speak English...".¹⁹⁹ The English clothes given to Irish chiefs by Sir John Perrot in 1585 were "...embraced like fetters...", a writing of conquest upon the body. Sir John deemed the difference between English and Irish attire as "...of being fit for all assemblies, and only fit for the woods and barbarous places...".²⁰⁰ Rich noted Irish refusal to take any precedent from the English²⁰¹, and that they paid no regard for an oath sworn on an English bible²⁰², and complained of their sullen ingratitude to the late Queen Elizabeth.²⁰³ Moryson's stomach churned at the sight of Irish culinary technique which he carefully disassociated from English²⁰⁴; Rich concurred and criticized Irish cleanliness generally but noted that "...the unnurtured sort among them are no less admiring our decencie, then wee their rudenesse and unciuity."²⁰⁵ The feeling that the mere Irish were "...natural haters of the English..."²⁰⁶ gained personification in a figure such as Shane O'Neill, the northern chief whose haughtiness at the English court amazed Elizabeth's courtiers. Notoriously he hanged a soldier for eating English biscuit, named his fortress the "Hate of Englishmen"²⁰⁷, cursed his people should any of them build houses or shire towns to invite the Englishman to live among them²⁰⁸, and refused to "...writh his mouth in clattering English...".²⁰⁹

What was perhaps most painful for English observers to witness was the patent degeneration into barbarism of those families of the grand Anglo-Norman stock that had first settled in Ireland to he extent that it was considered that many now displayed the traits of Irishness to a greater degree than the Irishry themselves. They "...showed such malice to the English nation as if they were ashamed to have any community with it."²¹⁰ They spoke Irish, wore Irish clothes, married and fostered children with the Irish, observed Irish laws, and accepted the church of Rome. Moryson was told "...twenty absurd things..." that they practised just because they would be contrary to the English (he had heard of forty practised

¹⁹⁹Stanihurst, p.11.

²⁰⁰from E.C.S. The Government of Ireland under Sir John Perrot. 1626 in Maxwell, p.350.

²⁰¹Rich, p.26.

²⁰²ibid, p.29.

²⁰³ibid, p.23.

²⁰⁴Moryson, "Description", p.424-5.

²⁰⁵Rich, p.26.

²⁰⁶from John Strype. Life of Sir Thomas Smith. octavo, Oxford. 1620, cited in Hore, p.188.

²⁰⁷Campion, p.127.

²⁰⁸Moryson, "Manners", p.322.

²⁰⁹Stanihurst, p.12.

²¹⁰Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.250.

,for the same reason, by the mere Irish²¹¹) and he concluded that "...they abhor from all things that agree with English civility."²¹² The ease with which the transformation English to Irish was accomplished horrified commentators who recognized little corresponding movement in the opposite direction; Camden wrote that "...one would not beleeeve in how short a time some English among them degenerate and grow out of kind."²¹³ This situation was much analysed, and usually the adoption of the triad of native language, apparel, and law was blamed. Stanihurst emphasizes the role of language in the subversion of the English (when the Irish tongue began to be used in the English Pale "...this canker tooke such deepe root, as the bodie that before was whole, and sound, was by little and little festered, and in maner wholte putrified"²¹⁴) and insists on the imposition of the conqueror's tongue; for Spenser the chief cause lay with a natural urge for liberty which the Irish manner indulged²¹⁵, and in fostering and marrying with the natives²¹⁶; but by the beginning of the seventeenth century the tendency was to see the bond of Catholicism as the fundamental unity between old English and mere Irish.²¹⁷ In Spenser's text Eudoxus opines that the movement of the gaelicized English from civility to barbarity, their betrayal of civility, warrants that they now be treated more severely than the "...rude Irish..." themselves.²¹⁸

Debate on the possibility of and strategies for the redemption of Ireland gave rise to a final allusive couplet, a favourite of Spenser's, that of disease and health; of Ireland's condition (and hence the condition of 'mere Irishness') as a curable disease. So Ireland is seen as a "...diseased patient..."²¹⁹, and England's method for its cure will adhere to that of "...wise physicians..."²²⁰. Later it is described as a "...wicked person dangerously sick..." who needs physician first and preacher later²²¹, and again, as a tree with poisoned branches which need to be lopped to recover the health of the whole.²²² Sir John Davis, after the 'Flight of the Earls' from Ulster in 1607, wrote that "If the empty veins of Ulster were once

²¹¹Moryson, "Manners", p.322.

²¹²Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.263.

²¹³Camden, p.148.

²¹⁴Stanihurst, p.10.

²¹⁵Spenser, p.101, 193.

²¹⁶ibid, p.106.

²¹⁷e.g. Moryson, "Commonwealth", p.260.

²¹⁸Spenser, p.192.

²¹⁹ibid, p.36.

²²⁰ibid, p.37.

²²¹ibid, p.124-5.

²²²ibid, p.134.

filled with good British blood, the whole body of this commonwealth would quickly recover perfection of health."²²³

²²³from letter from Sir John Davis to Salisbury, 10th June 1609, in Maxwell, p.52(fn).

This constellation of categories and concepts maps the terrain of a highly influential discourse on Ireland, a discourse with which all subsequent informed thinking about Ireland will, to some extent, have to negotiate. The circularity of the series of categories is notable; with the exception of the totalizing term barbarity (or savagery, which I am taking as an equivalency) none takes precedence over any other, each one is cognate with all the others, each one is inhabited by the others. So Ireland was disordered because it was barbarous, bestial, ignorant, irrational, diseased, sexually improper, rural, pastoral, indolent, and against God's laws; or it was bestial because it was barbarous, disordered, ignorant, irrational, diseased and so on. The categories formed a complex, each one related to and was supported by the others. The discourse itself, of course, was not and could not be fixed; it was subject to transformation and renegotiation from the perspective of new positions, however much its action tended to impede those positions being gained. This said, the categories, related to a generalized notion of 'native Ireland', clearly retained a currency into the nineteenth century²²⁴ despite the subsequent development of an aristocratic and Protestant-centred 'colonial nationalism' which claimed a brand of 'Irishness', harbouring a peripheral's resentment and pride in separateness and sowing the seeds of a modern national consciousness. In the eighteenth century notions of barbarity and savageness were aestheticized and made somewhat pictorial with the idea of the sublime, and passing into the nineteenth century they transformed again, it seems, under a politically secure and paternal landlord class, into the childlikeness²²⁵ which for some was exemplified by the still frequently Gaelic speaking Irish peasant, thus maintaining notions of primitiveness, irrationality, lack of evolution and development, and a corresponding need for guidance and authority. T.C Foster stated the necessity of extinguishing any agitation, whether Orange or Repeal: "If necessary, fear not to do it *despotically*. Remember you are dealing with a people who in the mass are almost uncivilized. Like children they require governing with a hand of power. They *require* authority, and will *bear* it. A more enlightened community would not require it, and would not bear it."²²⁶ Lord George Hill's paternalism was more benevolent. He spoke of "...the unspeakable satisfaction to be derived from an humble consciousness, that our time, thoughts, talents, influence, means, were devoted to the noble effort of raising

²²⁴The early texts were often referred to in the 19th century commentaries - there is a continual sense of awareness of their resonance and relevance; e.g. T.C. Foster (Moryson), p.411 and (Gerald), p.346-7 (footnote); Caesar Otway (Gerald), 1827; T. Crofton Croker (Camden), Chapter v, p.78-99.

²²⁵as in the Punch cartoons of the '40s and '50s, although the bestial could rise quickly again under the threat of Fenianism or the Land League; R.F. Foster, 1993, p.177, 182.

²²⁶T.C. Foster, p.599.

the character, encreasing and perpetuating the comforts of the kind-hearted beings whom Divine Providence has made to be mainly dependent upon our guardianship and mercy."²²⁷ In the Victorian documentation most of the other points endure with little modification however well-intentioned some of the propositions contained in specific documents may have been. The sense of arable ineptitude, always present in the charge of pastoralism, asserts itself, and the idea of the impracticality of the Celt, a notion that we have already seen related to indolence and irrationality, becomes more keen. Charles Trevelyan, the assistant secretary of the Treasury, key administrator of relief at the time of the mid-nineteenth century Great Famine, and vehement advocate of the doctrine of *laissez-faire* described himself as being a Celt "...belonging to the class of Reformed Cornish Celts, who by long habits of intercourse with the Anglo-Saxons have learned at last to be practical man."²²⁸ T.C. Foster's thought was in a markedly essential strain; the Celtic race come into their own when directed by others: "...guide them, lead them, govern them, keep a strict hand over them, which is only to be done by their acting under large and intelligent tillage farmers and capitalists and resident landlords, and they are capable of anything Wherever the people are employed by others, and directed and managed by others, they exhibit much quickness and talent, are industrious and faithful."²²⁹ While the men on the east coast of Ireland improved and prospered under their own initiative, the vain and indolent "... unmixed Celtic Irish, as I have seen them in Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, parts of Galway, and Clare, and Kerry, and parts of Cork, Cavan, and Roscommon..."²³⁰ stagnated. Thus it was "... the men on the west who, when we find them and ourselves no longer deceived by ill-judging friends, will require our aid, our instruction, our guidance, our example - who will require to be urged on, praised on, shamed on, led on, and, if necessary, forced on."²³¹

But essentialism did of course not necessarily result in such a pejorative tone. Matthew Arnold's gendering of the genius of Saxon and Celt is of some interest here. His call, in 1867, was to unite (or rather reconsummate) the steadfastness, honesty and practicality of the former with the spirituality, vitality, and passion of the latter to forge a national composite genius of immense resources. As anticipated, the Celt here plays the feminine; Arnold opines "... no doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, have something feminine in them, and the Celt is thus peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of feminine

²²⁷Hill, *Thoughts on Emigration*.

²²⁸cited in Woodham-Smith, p.59.

²²⁹T.C. Foster, p.370.

²³⁰*ibid*, p.46.

²³¹*ibid*, p.146; Foster noted that, when published, these comments received equal amounts of praise and abuse.

idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from its secret. Again, his sensitivity gives him a particularly near and intimate feeling of nature and the life of nature; here too he seems in a special way attracted by the secret before him, the secret of nature beauty and natural magic, and to be close to it, to half-divine it."²³²

Anglo-Norman and Tudor writing has been considered because in it Ireland has the character of strangeness, of a place that is being experienced anew, and the onus falls on that writing to represent it and make sense of it and thus put into play a way of thinking about it. English characterizations of Ireland as savage, bestial, and disordered show us that the modes of life in the latter did not conform with those valorized by the observer. An image of Ireland was fixed according to the terms of the preoccupations of the acquisitive incomer who ultimately sought authority, control, domination. The image was set in a well-publicized monolithic discourse to which there could only be scant native reply; that which there was was characteristically uncoordinated and fatalistic. The discourse was inevitably instrumental; the determination of traits of the Irish, and their designation as savage and "incorrect" legitimized and gave moral force to the seizure and reform of Ireland, identifying it as a field of potential manipulations. By examining the conditions of emergence of the discourse and its effects, we are alerted to the constructed nature of the idea of Ireland, to the commitment inherent in that construction, and to the implications and problems associated here with questions such as that of form, order and disorder. By articulating the discourse as evidenced by these early texts, we see the question of order emerging in a context of pure conflict, in the context of a requirement for domination, before it becomes an issue of economic imperative and self-evident rationality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

²³²Arnold, p.108.

Chapter 5: Geometry and Domination

Summoned to lay down the rules for the foundation of Perinthia, the astronomers established the place and the day according to the position of the stars; they drew the intersecting lines of the decumanus and the cardo, the first oriented to the passage of the sun and the other like the axis on which the heavens turn. They divided the map according to the twelve houses of the zodiac so that each temple and each neighbourhood would receive the proper influence of the favouring constellations; they fixed the point in the walls where gates should be cut, foreseeing how each would frame an eclipse of the moon in the next thousand years. Perinthia - they guaranteed - would reflect the harmony of the firmament; nature's reason and the gods' benevolence would shape the inhabitants' destinies.

Following the astronomers' calculations precisely, Perinthia was constructed; various people came to populate it; the first generation born in Perinthia began to grow within its walls; and these citizens reached the age to marry and have children.

In Perinthia's streets and squares today you encounter cripples, dwarfs, hunchbacks, obese men, bearded women. But the worst cannot be seen; guttural howls are heard from cellars and lofts, where families hide children with three heads or with six legs.

Perinthia's astronomers are faced with a difficult choice. Either they must admit that all their calculations were wrong and their figures are unable to describe the heavens, or else they must reveal that the order of the gods is reflected exactly in the city of monsters.

Italo Calvino. *Invisible Cities*. trans. W. Weaver. Picador, London. 1979. p.113-114.

a. Introduction and apology

Given its position and context within the present work, this chapter is necessarily fragmentary. The attempt at an exhaustive account of what is suggested here would be overwhelming, but it does point out a direction for further research. While keeping this limitation in mind, it should also be recognized that there are ways in which a fragmentary approach may work to advantage and provoke insights disallowed to a project which sets out to rigorously track the transmigration of a given body of ideas. This is not an argument for defective research technique, but rather an acknowledgement that, for example, a symbolic form can embody a constellation of ideas, perhaps of unconnected origin, whose availability shifts historically and which disjunctive 'slices' of history may better reveal. One thinks here of Rosalind Krauss' discussion of the 'grid', which she sees as a myth (in the sense developed by Levi-Strauss) functioning to allow contradictory meanings to be held in a kind of "para-logical suspension". As the contradiction, which required the myth, is narratively repressed sequential history is insensitive to the condition; notions will be 'present' and effective but concealed.¹

The 'Geometry' of the title is to be understood as Euclidean geometry as it descended from the Hellenic tradition. And I must admit to using the idea in a speculative, polemical, and what I hope is a suggestive way. So I'll be looking at extensions of the term into areas that are non-figurative, and making inferences from that, using notions such as centrality, axiality, and symmetry which I suppose one might say underpin geometricized perception, and examining the relationship between geometry and the achievement of the formed, the created, what is understood to have intentionality behind it, and therefore also the natural, inasmuch as the natural is understood as the intention of God. Also I'll be noting how geometric models give onto and are involved in certain conceptions of knowledge, of order, and of propriety. The particular power of geometry in the colonial context derives largely from its dual ability to 'externally' stand for the metaphysical (and thus the ultimate authority) and its 'internal' instrumental effectiveness with regard to techniques of control, to the demonstration of hierarchies, to individuation etc. And I will argue the perhaps unsurprising conclusion that, in the context of the colonial encounter, it was within the geometric labyrinth that the 'monstrous' was sought to be repressed, subdued, and tamed.

¹Krauss.

At the outset two points stand out immediately:

i) The striking persistence, in the Western tradition, of the equation of geometry with the metaphysical, the essential, the divine. This suggests the appearance of what Lefebvre has called *Absolute Space*. This is space which is at the same time mythical and proximate; to the extent that it is understood as the space of the metaphysical it is true space or the space of truth. As the embodiment of all space it is not ultimately located, but under the rituals and practices of a priesthood it is condensed in particular places so we can say "...the space of a sanctuary is absolute space...".² This space is both political and religious and presupposes the existence of religious institutions which invoke it. Through the two mechanisms of *identification* and *imitation* (that is, the apprehension of what represents absolute space, and the reproduction of that essential space elsewhere) this space of truth is extended and installed elsewhere to the benefit of the priesthood and the political power that they serve. At one stage Lefebvre makes the comment, which is very important here, "Being ritually affixable to any place and hence also detachable therefrom, the characteristic 'absolute' requires an identifying mark. It therefore generates forms, and forms accommodate it. Such forms are microcosms of the universe...".³ The identifying mark through which absolute space appears, as we will see, will be the geometric cipher. Bearing in mind the installation of the sacred through the cipher, and its mortal reproduction, we note Lord Roseberry's famous remark on the civilizing mission of colonialism; so the mission to civilize the other is an enterprise "human and not wholly human writ by the finger of the divine."⁴

The founding of such space has been characterized by Régis Debray as arising from a dual delimitation carried out in the face of the "... twin threats of disorder and death." Spatial delimitation, figural closure, opposes itself to spatial disintegration: "The return of the entropic river, reversal of the flow from order into disorder, is achieved by enclosure human society arises in the first instance against the idea of fundamental chaos, chaos in the etymological sense of lawless scattering, absence of organization." Delimitation in time, the mythic point of origin and consequent ritual re-enactment and renewal, "... in short, all those forms of magical behaviour signifying defeat of the irreversibility of time", confronts the threat of death.⁵ The argument here will develop an understanding of the categories of the

²Lefebvre, p.336.

³ibid, p.237.

⁴cited in Bhabha, p.318.

⁵Debray, p.27-28.

'grotesque' and the 'monstrous' as emerging in opposition to, as profaning, the sacred closure of which Debray speaks.

ii) The striking persistence, in the Western tradition, of the (seemingly indissociable) relationship between geometry and architecture, and hence also between architecture and the metaphysical. Architecture is both inhabited and realized by geometry. Geometrical technique lies behind architecture to the extent that we might ask 'What would be left if we looked to find some idea of architecture outlying this?' Two subdistinctions might be made:

a) The use of geometry as a technique which permits the construction of buildings from a previously worked-out representation (a plan). It's to this that we owe the possibility of the projector ... that is, one who contrives a plan in the anticipation of the accurate translation of that plan into built form. So here we have the possibility of the architect and of a truly zenithal coordinating eye. An eye, that is, which sees from above and which regulates and calibrates form and space.

b) The use of pure geometric figures as a regulating device for architecture, as a structuring ideal. With the configuration of urban space according to geometric form the control embodied in the zenithal eye is made figuratively explicit and the settlement emerges in enduring reference to the authority of planner, monarch, or deity.

How then are we to relate the metaphysical notion of "order" to the clusters? While their recognized "Irishness" located them under the influence of the constellation of categories interwoven with the idea of native Ireland, their jumbled morphologies confirmed and further articulated these conventional understandings. After quoting 19th century comments on the irregularity of the clusters, Estyn Evans remarks that "The absence of any discernable plan as compared with many English or German villages has led visiting critics to regard the clachan as a reflection of the disordered Irish mentality."⁶ In the previous chapter reference was made to how, from the crystallization of the discourse in the Anglo-Norman period, the overarching concept of the barbarian was related to a series of deficiencies. The lack of order was one of the indices of the barbarian. But what could we say was lacking in the way in which space was constituted in the clusters that resulted in the lack of order, that removed them from the domain of that order valorized by their observers? Questioning along this line we approach the suggestion that it is the

⁶Evans, 1988, p.30.

absence of certain characteristics derived from geometrically formulated techniques of settlement, or at least a geometrically inflected conception of space, that marks the clusters as being disordered. My argument will run that the trajectory which geometry established, and indeed which might be thought of as being proper to it, set it in motion around some idea of an apprehension of the divine, that which is beyond the physical and hence bears greater authority, and the translation of that apprehension into physical terms. And in those terms not only did the conception of geometry permit a regulatory "ghost" form to pre-exist building on site thus constraining, tidying, and ordering the future accumulation of built form, but it also opened certain possibilities for the demonstration of a hierarchical social order through a legible play of positions within the abstract geometric envelope. It appears that the discipline of geometry emerged in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia in relation to problems such as surveying and certainly, as will be indicated, the evidence is that from the Hellenic period geometry was intimately connected with questions of proportion and degree. My tendency is to see in the considerable intersection between Euclidean geometry and the Western tradition of architecture and planning (with the possible exception of the theorized limitless grid, i.e. that grid beyond which no human agency resides) a momentum which favours the formation of intrinsically hierarchical spaces. If geometry facilitates the casting-out of a conceptual net over physically unclaimed land, delimiting space, parcelling it up, locating sites and structurally constituting intended settlement, it also permits net and settlement to be referred back to the individual of authority, to the zenithal eye of planner, conqueror, governor, or king. Indeed Herodotus speculated that geometry found its origin in Sesostris' dividing-up of Egypt for taxation purposes, afterwards passing into Greece.⁷ If, then, we associate geometry with what we might call an architecture of domination, we will be unsurprised to witness a prescriptive drive for spatial order being put into play in a context of colonization, plantation, or landlordism. It is geometry that tames the beast! An Irish poem, written around the time of the first plantation of Ulster dwells on the new land divisions both conceptual and physical: "This the land of noble Niall's posterity they portion out among themselves without (leaving) a jot of Flann's milk-yielding plain but we find it (cut up) into 'acres'. We have lived to see (affliction heavy!) the tribal convention places emptied; the (finny) wealth perished away in the stream: dark thickets of the chase turned into streets the mountain (allotted) all in fenced fields ... the (open) green is crossed by girdles of twisting fences, and they (the strangers) practise not to gather together their horses for the race."⁸

⁷Rykwert, 1988, p.87.

⁸"Irish Poem in Standish O'Grady, Catalogue of Irish Mss. in the British Museum, p.374-5" in Maxwell, p.290-1.

b. 'Order'

A striking indicator of the sense-difference between the ancient Greek *κοσμος* and the modern English counterpart, *cosmos*, is that the latter is a noun with no corresponding verb. The Greek *κοσμεο* is taken to mean, as Gregory Vlastos puts it, "... to set in order, to marshall, to arrange. It is what the military commander does when he arrays man and horses for battle; what a civic official does in preserving the lawful order of a state; what a cook does in putting foodstuffs together to make an appetizing meal; what Odysseus' servants have to do to clean up the gruesome mess in the palace after the massacre of the suitors." This is not an ill-considered arranging "... but one that strikes the eye or the mind as pleasingly fitting: as setting, or keeping, or putting back, things in their proper order. There is a marked aesthetic component here, which leads to a derivative use of *kosmos* to mean not *order* as such, but *ornament, adornment* what *kosmos* denotes is a crafted, composed, beauty-enhancing order."⁹ This ordering results in a general well-being, at once moral and aesthetic, a general correctness and rectitude. In Plato's thought, the author of this order through which the world is made a *κοσμος* is the transcendental God of the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge ('Craftsman'). This conception is erected in opposition to the Ionian *φυσιολογοι* who made no appeal to a "... transcendant ordering intelligence."¹⁰ The high God takes up matter in its formless and incoherent state and impresses it in the likeness of an ideal model existing in the eternal world of Being. The result, however, as it appears in the transitory world of Becoming is only an imperfect copy of the eternal Form. Matter, in its four elemental forms (earth, water, air, and fire), is impressed with a structure corresponding to four of the five regular convex solids of Euclidean geometry; its emergence into specific geometric form is its transformation onto *κοσμος*. "Before that time they were all without proportion or measure; fire, water, earth and air bore some traces of their proper nature, but were in the disorganized state to be expected of anything which god has not touched, and his first step when he set about reducing them to order was to give them a definite pattern of shape and number."¹¹ Evidently the ideality of the geometric figure is related to its perceived homogeneity, its freedom, one might say, from contamination. Plato deduces that the cosmos must be spherical, a form of absolute homogeneity, because the homogeneous is "... ten thousand times more beautiful ..." than the heterogeneous.¹² Bertrand Russell

⁹Vlastos, p.3.

¹⁰Ibid, p.22.

¹¹Plato, *53.

¹²Vlastos, p.29.

comments: "Geometry deals with exact circles, but no sensible object is exactly circular; however carefully we may use our compasses, there will be some imperfections and irregularities. This suggests the view that all exact reasoning applies to ideal as opposed to sensible objects; it is natural to go further, and to argue that thought is nobler than sense, and the objects of thought more real than those of sense-perception. Mystical doctrines as to the relation of time to eternity are also reinforced by pure mathematics, for mathematical objects, such as numbers, if real at all, are eternal and not in time. Such eternal objects can be conceived as God's thoughts. Hence Plato's doctrine that God is a geometer, and Sir James Jeans' belief that He is addicted to arithmetic."¹³ The notion of the Demiurge measuring out, appropriating (the action of the geometer and also of the architect¹⁴), was one of the images Plato used in describing his activity. And certainly after Pythagoras' apprehension of the problem of incommensurables, which appeared to disprove his famous theorem regarding right-angled triangles, the conviction of Greek mathematicians was that geometry had to be established independently of arithmetic as that which secured measure and degree; only by its discipline was a correct determination of the measure of real and hypothetical objects assured. Vlastos comments that Plato's representation of the deity was the noblest ever projected in classical antiquity and it opened the way to a "... radically new idea of piety for the intellectual which the traditionalists would have thought impious: that of striving for similitude to God ...".¹⁵ While the purity of projected geometric figures is abstract, is absent in the physical world, geometry's axioms and theorems were held to be true of real space (the word's Greek derivation is the combined form of γη (earth) and -μετρία (measuring)¹⁶). Plato's famous doctrine fixes a conception of the divine which has far-reaching consequences; we have a metaphysics of form¹⁷, a celestial presence who utilizes mathematical technique in the recovery of the formless, and a sensible world-surface on which man might aspire to, and invoke, the divine mimetically using the discipline of geometry.

¹³Russell, p.55-6.

¹⁴e.g. Sir William Petty's phrase, "... the Artichect {sic} of the firmament ..."; Petty, p.26. And Wooton "This led me to contemplate the Fabrique of our owne Bodies, wherein the *High Architect* of the world, has displaied such skill as did stupifie all humane reason.' The term 'High Architect', whilst probably drawn from Ficino's commentary on Plato, foreshadowed the title 'High Architect of the Universe' used for God in masonic documents and rituals" (Hart, p.15, quoting from H. Wooton. *The Elements of Architecture* (1624)).

¹⁵Vlastos, p.28.

¹⁶O.E.D., p.42.

¹⁷Which might be understood as an encoded writing of the universe. "The traditional medieval juxtaposition of world and book was based on evidence that both were immediately decipherable, while Galileo, instead, stressed that 'philosophy ... written in this great book which is always open before our eyes (I call it the universe) ... cannot be understood if we do not first learn the language and the characters in which it is written,' namely, 'triangles, circles and other geometric figures.' For the natural philosopher as for the philologist, the text is a profound, invisible entity to be reconstructed independently of material data: 'figures, numbers and movements, but not smells, nor tastes, nor sounds, which I do not believe are anything more than names outside the living animal!'; Ginzburg, p.107-108.

The sense that has been developed is of mathematics as being beyond the sensible world, as being more noble, as apprehending the metaphysical, the essential, the transcendental, the true. The equation of the geometrical with the divine was to echo down through medieval scholasticism. The representation of God through the symbol of circle and sphere stretched from the Orphic poets, through Plato, Plotinus, the mystical theologians of the Middle Ages, and found 15th century resolution in Nicholas of Cusa and Ficino, both of whom visualized Him as centre and circumference. This represents one of two strands of the Classical tradition in view of which Wittkower located Alberti's famous advocacy of the circle-derived centralized temple in the first and hugely influential Renaissance treatise on architecture, his *Dereaedificatoria*.¹⁸ The second strand was the congruence of music and geometry; both are structured by a set of mathematically defined relationships which achieve harmony and which were seen to echo the laws of harmonic numbers which saturated all as the essence of all creation.¹⁹ The soul of the individual apprehends the essential mathematical harmonies made manifest in the temple and so the divinity is revealed. Alberti, a "brilliant geometer"²⁰, locates the temple at the peak of the urban typological hierarchy; it is the building type which is, as the dwelling-place of the gods, "... obviously the greatest and most important ornament of a city ...".²¹ The temple is of principle importance and consequence in the urban grain, and should be sited in "a proud place"²² preferably surrounded by fine squares to ensure its visibility from all directions. According to Alberti Nature herself favoured the circle ("Need I mention the earth, the stars, the animals, their nests, and so on, all of which she has made circular?"), and it seems clear that he considered the forms of the circle and its derivations as being those through which could be best realized the proportional inter-relationship of the temple's parts which resulted in that metaphysical beauty conducive to a condition of piety. "In such centralized plans the geometrical pattern will appear absolute, immutable, static and entirely lucid"²³; *revelatory* in fact. And not only was a pure geometric figure the image of God, but geometry itself was the discipline through which proportion was realized, proportion being that which structures and orders creation.

There are clear political implications here. While Alberti's discourse on sacred architecture was the apotheosis of his thinking on

¹⁸Wittkower, p.25-6.

¹⁹ibid, p.8, 27.

²⁰As described by "...his abbreviator colleague Flavio Biondo"; Alberti, "Introduction", p.xvii.

²¹Alberti, p.194.

²²ibid, p.195.

²³Wittkower, p.7.

geometry, his geometer's eye roved over the fabric of the city. Despite the privilege subsequently accorded to the temple he writes: "The principal ornament to any city lies in the siting, layout, composition, and arrangement of its roads, squares, and individual works: each must be properly planned and distributed according to use, importance, and convenience. For without order there can be nothing commodious, graceful, or noble."²⁴ He maintains a qualified agreement with Plato's dislike for the corrupting influence of the foreigner within the city, compromising the "ancient frugality" of the citizens and weakening "traditional customs"²⁵ (and, according to the elders of Epidamnium, developing a moral decadence which could precipitate revolution). So the city is to be zoned on several levels: the foreigners are to be "... segregated into some place suitable for them and not inconvenient for the citizens ..." and allowed access to certain roads, but the "... more private parts of the city ..." are to be withheld from their view; in turn the citizens themselves are to be divided according to rank and occupation; and finally, the city's workshops should be graded from the edifying silversmiths', painters' and jewellers' on the forum to the fetid tanners on the northern periphery from whence the wind rarely blows.²⁶

Even in the passage from Classical stasis to Baroque dynamic geometry remained the touchstone of the architect; a detailed study of the drawings and restless Baroque architecture of Borromini concludes that he "...evolved even his most complex and apparently whimsical designs by a series of geometric manipulations."²⁷

One of the fruits that the Renaissance bore was a huge resurgence in Platonism. In the dedication of the Plotinus commentaries Marsilio Ficino relates how the coming of Byzantine scholars to the Council of Florence gave great encouragement to Greek studies. Manuscripts, collected by agents of wealthy humanists, were arriving in the West from Byzantium; Ficino himself translated the Plato manuscripts which had been assembled by Cosimo de' Medici.²⁸ But, despite this new attentiveness, the European Platonic tradition had been continuous; Platonic tenets had become naturalized.²⁹ While the works of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola were well known to such figures of the early English Renaissance such as Sir Thomas

²⁴Alberti, p.191.

²⁵Subverting selfhood and homogeneity?

²⁶Alberti, p.191-2.

²⁷Blunt, p.47.

²⁸Yates, 1991, p.12-13.

²⁹"Whilst it is true that the Greek studies and discoveries of the humanists played a tremendous part in enlarging the available knowledge of the works of Plato and his successors yet the great motive force of Renaissance Platonism flows into it from its roots in the whole tradition of Western thought, both philosophical and religious" (Yates, 1942, p.3-4).

More their influence on a figure such as Shakespeare was less pronounced. Frances Yates comments that he "... as we know, was no Greek scholar, and his 'Platonism' is, perhaps mainly the development of those lines of 'Timaeon' and mystical thought, which he would hardly think of as 'Platonic' but as 'native' and 'natural', rooted in the English soul ...".³⁰ Little terrorized the imagination (literary, at least) of Elizabethan England, the author of the great 'survey literature' on Ireland, as forcefully as the fear of chaos. In the historic foreground the decade of tragic and bloody religious fanaticism preceding Elizabeth's ascension to the English throne in 1558, swinging from Protestant under Edward to Catholic under Mary, had traumatized the country. Beyond, the apocalyptic disintegration of late medieval society, from the middle of the 14th century onward, continued to resonate, haunting the new era. Widespread disease of awful proportion, religious schism, the rise of heretical sects and the fragmentation of the Holy Roman Empire, instability in the European monarchies, the threat of the Ottoman Turks from the east, civil war and factionalism at home³¹ - all shred late medieval Europe in the English psyche and contributed to an orientation of mind which sought ossification in the face of dreadful uncertainty. Earthly order was not independent but imbued with a universal cosmic order; "If the Elizabethans believed in an ideal order animating earthly order, they were terrified lest it be upset, and appalled by the visible tokens of disorder that suggested its upsetting. They were obsessed by the fear of chaos and the fact of mutability; and the obsession was powerful in proportion as their faith in the cosmic order was strong. To us chaos means hardly more than confusion on a large scale; to an Elizabethan it meant the cosmic anarchy before creation and the wholesale dissolution that would result if the pressure of Providence relaxed and allowed the law of nature to cease functioning."³²

On what did this great and crucial order rest? The answer; incrementalism, due place, mensuration, proportion, degree. This is famously set forth in Ulysses' speech on degree in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*:

"The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
Observe degree priority and place
Insisture course proportion season form

³⁰ibid, p.9.

³¹The bubonic plague of 1348 annihilated between one fifth and one half of the population of Europe, the total mortality being perhaps around 20 million persons; the papal division lasted between 1378-1417, Urban IV being established in Rome, Clement VII at Avignon; Constantinople falls to the Turks in 1453, as does Athens in 1458, as does Otranto in 1480. Baldwin-Smith, p.16-28.

³²Tillyard, p.23-24.

Office and custom, in all line of order; ...
Oh, when degree is shak'd,
 Which is the ladder to all high designs,
 The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
 Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,
 Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
 The primogenitive and due of birth,
 Prerogative of age, crowns sceptres laurels,
 But by degree stand in authentic place?
 Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And hark, what discord follows. Each thing meets
 In mere oppugnancy. The bounded waters
 Should lift their bosoms higher that the shores
 And make a sop of all this solid globe.
 Strength should be lord to imbecility,
 And the rude son should strike his father dead.
 This chaos, when degree is suffocate,
 Follows the choking."³³

The notion of a static cosmic hierarchy within which all entities were represented, ranked in a 'spatial' series of ascending steps, was of considerable antiquity. It has been considered Platonic in its first European expression and was transmitted "... to medieval and Renaissance theology and philosophy by such men as Plotinus, Boethius, Pico della Mirandola, Ficino, Henry More, John Colet, and others too numerous to need mention."³⁴ This holistic system organized the bewildering variety of spiritual and material entities into a comprehensible order authored by God. In Sir Thomas Elyot's words: "Every kind of trees herbs birds beasts and fishes have a peculiar disposition appropereed unto them by God their creator; so that in everything is order, and without order may be nothing stable or permanent. And it may not be called order except it do contain in it degrees, high and base, according to the merit or estimation of the thing that is ordered."³⁵ Jean Bodin, writing in the third book of the *Commonweale*, professed "... it is a most antient and received opinion of the wise Almighty God himselfe ... that hee divided the mingled and confused parts of the rude *Chaos*, and so settled everie thing in its due place and order."³⁶ This unifying incremental linkage found expression in the

³³cited in *ibid*, p.17-18; Hodgen, p.395.

³⁴Hodgen, p.396.

³⁵cited in Tillyard, p.20; Wrightson, p.20.

³⁶cited in Hodgen, p.400.

idea of the Chain of Being in which all found a position, man's being the couple between physical and spiritual domains, his flesh corruptible, his spirit eternal.³⁷ What was achieved was a universe tabulated in an ascending series of nested hierarchies.

As the ordered cosmos was hierarchic, so too should be the ordered world of men. Bodin, quoted above, went on to criticize any tendency to egalitarianism. He set forth a hierarchy of 'states' in a monarchy: king, clergy, senate, warriors, 'gowne men', magistrates and judges etc. This in turn hints at an ideal expressive social topography after the manner of Alberti. Sir Walter Raleigh, scanning from God to mineral to man, wrote: "For that infinite wisdom of God, which hath distinguished his angels by degrees, which hath given greater and less light and beauty to heavenly bodies, which hath made differences between beasts and birds, created the eagle and the fly, the cedar and the shrub, and among stones given the fairest tincture to the ruby and the quickest light to the diamond, hath also ordained kings, dukes or leaders of the people, magistrates, judges, and other degrees among men."³⁸ Such thought on social matters was of course nothing new; St. Hildegard of Bingen set forth the hierarchy of estates in the 12th century; St. Thomas Aquinas confirmed their necessity in the 13th.³⁹ Commentators on the Elizabethan state saw its maintenance and efficiency resting on "... a commonwealth composed of balanced and harmonious elements in which all men would know their place, and no man would hanker after what was not rightly his."⁴⁰ The common analogy between the Tudor state and the organic order of the human body, later so potently conjured by Hobbes, illustrated the required submission of all to their position, the lower classes toiling to support nobility (shoulders and arms), judiciary (ears), priesthood (eyes), and prince (head). These functional relationships, already implicitly hierarchical, seem to have been interpreted with an increasing sensitivity to gradation in 16th century England.⁴¹ The Elizabethan conception of a hierarchic and anthropomorphic society was seen to be fully in accord with the order of creation. Due hierarchy was order and was divinely ordained; and man was, as the *microcosm*, a model of the universe.⁴²

³⁷The tendency of the Renaissance revival of historiography, and ideas of cultural progress, which implied a temporal, evolutionary progress was to problematize the rigidity of this 'architectonic principle' (as Hodgen aptly puts it); Hodgen, p.389-391.

³⁸cited in Tillyard, p.19.

³⁹Hodgen, p.397.

⁴⁰Baldwin Smith, p.80.

⁴¹Wrightson, p.18-20.

⁴²Raleigh, in *History of the World*, writes "... and because in the little frame of man's body there is a representation of the Universal ... therefore was man called *Microcosmos*, or the little World" (Hodgen, p.394). Man "... contained within himself samples of all the degrees of creation, excelling in this not only beasts but the angles, who were entirely spiritual beings. But it was not only a matter of including in

Throughout all this thinking on order, we expect geometry to maintain its particular alignment with measure, degree, and proportion, and hence with the banishment of chaos and the achievement of order and form. In 1583 we find the ecclesiastic, Gervase Babington, while discoursing on possessions taken in wars against pirates or in defence of the realm, advise: "But the custome and law of all well ordered wars is this, or should be, that what spoyle soever is got, and not given before hand by the captayne to the souldiers, ought by them to be brought unto him, and by him to be disposed to everie man geometrically that is according to everie mans service and worthinesse, not Arithmetically, that is to every man alike."⁴³ Geometry conceptually lay uniquely related to the divinely authored cosmic order, to a social order sanctioned by its microcosmic nature, and to possibilities for the configuration of social space.

himself these samples: man's very anatomy corresponded with the physical ordering of the universe" (Tillyard, p.76).

⁴³Babington, p.386.

Discussion in England on the question of colonization in Ireland appears from 1521⁴⁴; after 1534 the debate subsided for a while until it reappeared (to governmental and speculative ends) with great vigour in the period between 1550 and 1580.⁴⁵ Awareness of, and sensitivity to, Classical precedent was high. For the Europe confronting the New World the Classical narratives and commentaries were familiar, authoritative, and germane. A political commentator such as Machiavelli drew on them in his advocacy of colonization.⁴⁶ Thomas More, himself writing against the 'New Statesmanship'⁴⁷, seems to have been the first Englishman to have used the word *colonia* in its Roman sense. His *Utopia*, which extolled enlightened colonization, was published in 1516 and dedicated to Henry VIII. The Tudor ascension to the English throne itself had notable Classical resonance. The writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth told how Brutus, a Trojan and related to the founder of Rome, had in ancient times come into Britain and had founded London as the new Troy. He was the patriarch of the British kings from whom the Tudors, as of Welsh descent and therefore ancient British ancestry, were descended. "When the Tudors ascended the throne of England, so runs the myth, the ancient Trojan-British race of monarchs once more resumed the imperial power and brought in golden age of peace and plenty."⁴⁸ Under the Tudors the British monarchy stood in the lineage of the founder of Rome itself.

Although the twin forts, *Governor* and *Protector*, founded on the western border of the Pale between 1546 and 1548 by the Lord Deputy Edward Bellingham appear in their development similar to Roman models (and were admired by Sir Thomas Smith), the first unequivocal reference to Roman precedent in an Irish context was that made by Edward Walshe in 1552.⁴⁹ But it was with Sir Thomas Smith in the early 1570s that the Roman analogy (and early English colonial theory) reached its most evolved state. Sir Thomas and his son actively debated the strategies contained in the ancient texts. An examination of the marginalia of Gabriel Harvey's folio copy of Livy's *Decades* has revealed a debate, stimulated by Livy's text, that seems to have taken place in Hill Hall, Smith's house, in 1570 or 1571. The relative merits of Marcellus' and Fabius Maximus' military tactics were at

⁴⁴Quinn, 1976, p.76.

⁴⁵Quinn, 1945, p.543.

⁴⁶Quinn, 1976, p.74.

⁴⁷Chambers, p.142.

⁴⁸Yates, 1993, p.50.

⁴⁹Quinn, 1976, p.77; Loeber, p.16-17.

issue; Sir Thomas Smith and Walter Haddon opposed Thomas Smith Junior and Sir Humphrey Gilbert.⁵⁰ All were interested in the question of settlement in Ireland, and Gilbert had recently returned from his infamous action against the Munster rebels.

Classical antiquity's remarks on Ireland were interestedly quoted by authors such as Camden; and the Gaelic landscape that now faced England, where, as Camden himself supposed, the pre-Classical chaos of the 'old world' was believed to have gathered, could be seen (at least by a mind eager to embrace the analogy) as what had faced the venerable Roman colonists. Tacitus' description in *Germania* of an *informen terris*, meaning at once both "'shapeless' and 'dismal'" makes the point.⁵¹ In Sir Thomas Smith's view the English were the inheritors of the true Classical tradition having, more than any other nation, remained true to the precepts of Roman law and order.⁵² His colonial projection emphasized the city, and it appears that he was "... thinking in terms of an independant entity where English laws (or Smith's laws perhaps) would run, not those of the royal administration in Dublin, so that the inhabitants would be carrying English law, like Roman colonists, into a new environment."⁵³ In his book "The Idea of a Town" Joseph Rykwert is concerned with the conceptual constitution of the Roman town. He criticizes those contemporary commentators on town planning who, in looking for the progressive development of a sensible planning method in antiquity, overemphasize the evidence that is available for the siting and organization of settlement on purely pragmatic terms and correspondingly discount the obscure magical and religious prescriptions connected with settlement foundation. He suggests that desirable physical conditions for a settlement were not simply autonomous phenomena to be codified and sought out; instead "It is the good will of the divine powers which is transmitted in the favourable physical conditions. Its assurance might have been more easily obtained, if the recent readings of Platonic urbanism are taken correctly, by establishing harmony between the city and the structure of the created universe rather than by any other means".⁵⁴ Rykwert describes in some detail the Latin and Etruscan foundation rite, or *inauguratio*, of which a key component was the augur's inscription of a diagram, the "templum", onto the ground using a curved wand. The templum appears to have been a geometric (or at least to have become a geometricized) figure, a circle bisected by two lines crossing at right angles to one another at the circle's centre point. It seems that in one

⁵⁰Jardine, p.72-75.

⁵¹Schama, p.81.

⁵²Letter to Fitzwilliam, 8th November, 1572- Fitzwilliam Papers, Carte Ms 57, f.435; cited in Quinn, 1945, p.546.

⁵³Quinn, 1976, p.80).

⁵⁴Rykwert, 1988, p.43.

respect this was a representation of the heavens, the bisecting lines being derived from the cardinal points of the compass. Etymologists have connected the word *templum* to the Greek τέμενος (temenos), that is, a sacred enclosure, a piece of land defined by boundaries and sanctified. The Latin and Etruscan *templum* had wide implications; it was a space set aside for civil and religious function, a bounded area freed from evil influence and consecrated. Any properly consecrated town was a *templum*, as were Roman army camps situated with due consideration and ritual. This is, in fact, Lefebvre's Absolute Space and the geometric cipher is its 'name', its identifying mark. The importance of the boundary is emphasized by the Roman ritual of the cutting of the *sulcus primigenius* or first furrow. This was the ceremonial circumscription and physical definition of the purified enclosure. At the positions of the city gates, the founder, who ploughed, would take up his plough and carry it across the land on which the gates would be sited.⁵⁵ Rykwert describes the augur's inscription of the geometric figure of the *templum* so: "The purpose of drawing the diagram was to set the general order of the sky in a particular place, with the augur at the heart of it. This was accompanied when the great temple of the sky was first condensed into the ideal form of the augur's diagram, and then projected on to the tract of land before him by ritual formula".⁵⁶ Thus order, control, and hierarchy were established for earthly dwelling, legitimized through appeal to the divine model of a cosmological geometry. In effect every *templum* would be constituted by the divine geometry; each displayed an authoritative order which was distinct from the unconsecrated world beyond the boundary and which formed the basis for a legible spatial interplay between centre, primary and secondary divisions (*cardo* and *decumanus*) and periphery. Geometry, identified by Plato with God, became the means by which the divine nature received an earthly translation through the medium of architecture.

Throughout Rykwert's book his interest is fixed primarily on how the town in the ancient world was conceived, how it was thought of in an ideal sense rather than on its ultimate phenomenal reality. And he holds that this abstraction was maintained as symbol and interpretative key to accrescent urban form however intricate it might become. The city was integrated with the structure of the universe and reconciled the human subject with it; the Roman citizen who passed along the *cardo* moved down the axis around which the sun turned, and those who followed the *decumanus* followed the sun's course. While the historic relationship between the development of the Etruscan Rite and the notion of orthogonal planning is

⁵⁵ibid, p.65.

⁵⁶ibid, p.47.

uncertain, they were certainly unified by the Roman period. It is clear however that there were strong cosmological concerns in play in the very idea of orthogonality. The city that Hippodamus of Miletus (whose name is virtually synonymous with the concept) projects is orthogonal and is zoned according to class of inhabitant and form of land tenure. The tentative conclusion is that "... as ancient authors suggested, orthogonal planning was the product of grafting a law of land tenure on to some form of quasi-astronomical surveying, which gave landed property divine, and in particular celestial, sanction."⁵⁷

In his preface to the hardback edition Rykwert comments that "The rectilinear patterns of the Roman towns, which survive in the street patterns and even the country lanes of old imperial lands, from Scotland to Sudan, are often thought to be the by-product of a utilitarian surveying technique. This is not how the Romans themselves saw it: the city was organized according to divine laws."⁵⁸ He does not, however, go on to develop a connection between the conception of settlement that he describes and the activity of colonization; its instrumental aspect is left untheorized. However poetic the distillation of the concept of settlement to cosmological geometric cipher may have been to the Roman citizen, this reduction (and I think we are right to view it as a reduction of the "urban" experience no matter how originary it is) has certain ramifications. For with the identification of the *essence* of a collective dwelling the colonial city is now made fully possible. The colonial city derives its particular character not from its independence or from within its own entity but rather from its ability to stand for the homeland and mother city. With this distillation of essence the colonial city is instituted as not just representing another, but as embodying it, as drawing its being from the primal spirit of the mother city; there is a common identity.⁵⁹ So, as every Roman colonial city was a remaking of Rome, so every founder was an amanuensis for Romulus. With the magical unfurling of the templum over savage soil the land was reconstituted and purged of the the foreign; that which was specific to place, idiosyncratic of conquered terrain, erased, that which was the colonists' established. As apprehending the

⁵⁷ibid, p.88.

⁵⁸Rykwert, 1976, p.25.

⁵⁹I am stressing here the 'dependency' on the 'metropolis' necessary for the notion of a colony (see Finley, p.171). While the Greek 'colony' in general founded a separate city-state, the relationship with the metropolis was clearly of importance. Where a colony was of mixed origin there is sometimes evidence of competition to identify one city as metropolis. Graham comments that where identity of cult between colony and metropolis persisted the implication is that connections were maintained between kinship groups of colony and mother city (Graham, p.15). Rykwert suggests that "It is almost as if the founding and re-founding of the Greek city was the work of an independently divinely inspired figure whereas that of the Roman city was always a substitution, a vicarious action" (Rykwert, "Preface to the Paper Edition", 1988).

metaphysical order, as instituting the space of truth, colonial space redeems the formless and thus has the status of 'correction' rather than that of confiscation.

While at the outset acknowledging the widespread and culturally diverse parallels (but also their strongly cosmological aspect), it does seem that we find hints of the templum in the Tudor context. In Sir Thomas Smith's initial petition to Elizabeth "... the intention to make the colony another England in its social and economic structure was clearly expressed, and in the elaboration of the project this idea is constantly stressed."⁶⁰ Smith's projected fortress city "Elizabetha", which he called for his son to found in imitation of Romulus⁶¹, was to be a little London, first a defensive stronghold, then a centre of civilization and trade around which parishes and villages would be organized. In his second scheme which, in Dewar's opinion, was less of a business venture and more of "... a cherished dream of conquest and settlement which could compare with the great colonizing achievements of Rome"⁶², network of towns was to surround a carefully planned main city, the houses and streets in each one arranged to divisions calibrated by Smith. In the centre of the grid of blocks of housing and passageways lay an open market place.⁶³ The cities of More's Utopians were quartered, suggesting a similar conceptual structure. There were even four corresponding hospitals, pragmatically located outside the city walls.⁶⁴ J.H. Andrews has published a proposal of 1586 for the lay-out of a 'seignory' of 12,000 acres in Munster. The seignory was to be the unit division of the colony, a square whose sides were around 4 1/2 miles long, socially hierarchic and representing both manor and parish. "A square block of nine seignories would constitute a hundred or wapentake in which the central village would be raised to the status of market town Here was an Elizabethan version of the hierarchy of central places."⁶⁵ Notable, but of course unsurprising, is the orthogonality of the scheme, two main passageways meeting perpendicularly in a bounded central area on which sits, centrally, the church. What is significant here is the potency of this idea with regard to the installation of the 'model' (that is, ideal form). For the Renaissance mind, geometricized space was the 'natural' correlate of the ideal. The first fully planned ideal city of the Renaissance, Filarete's *Sforzinda* (1457-64) shows it well.⁶⁶ Renewed attention to Vitruvius, with his emphasis on the circular town plan and street orientation in view of wind direction, reinforced the

⁶⁰Quinn, 1945, p. 552.

⁶¹Cal. S.P. Foreign 1583 & Ad., 467-8, cited in *ibid*, p.547.

⁶²Dewar, p.164.

⁶³*ibid*, p.165-6.

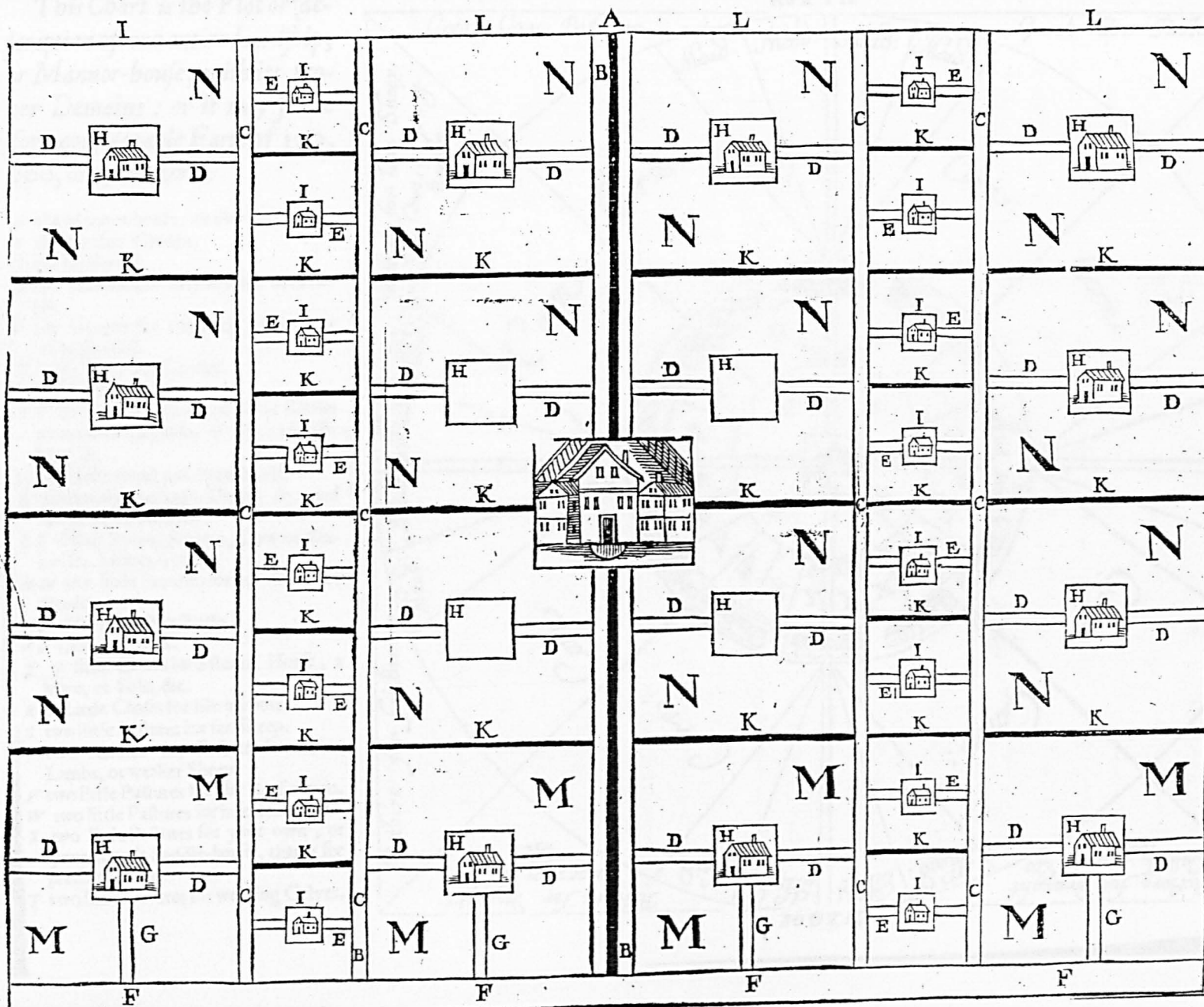
⁶⁴More, p.41-42.

⁶⁵*ibid*.

⁶⁶Rosenau, p.46-49.

This Chart contains 2000 Acres, consisting of or divided into 16 great Farms, containing 100 Acres apiece, and 16 lesser Farms, consisting of 25 Acres apiece: And that so as each thousand Acres may be considered apart, as being divided in the middle by the great Bank or high way, with the two great Drains on each side of the same.

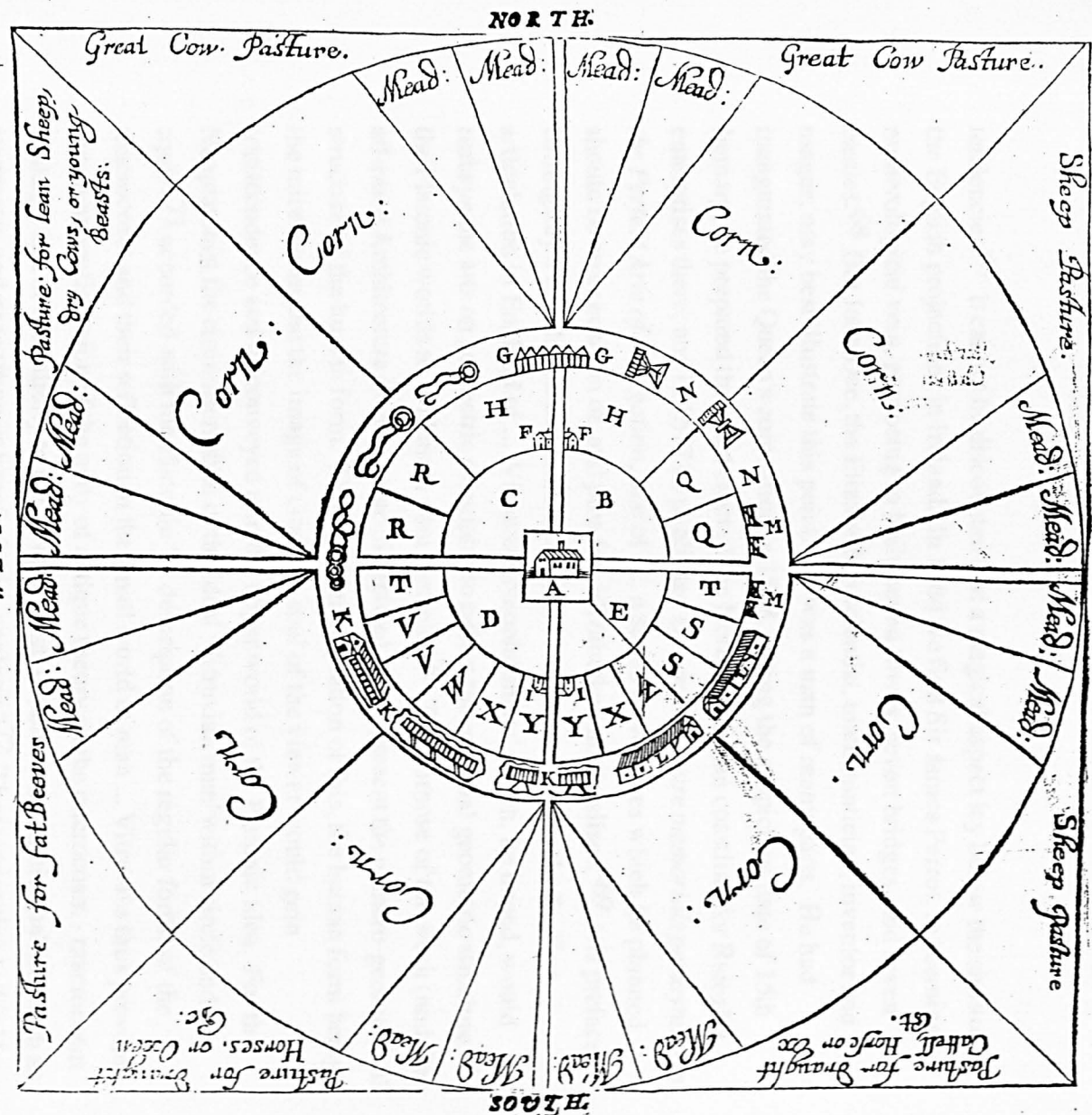
A the Bank.
B the 2 great Drains on each side.
C the four lesser Drains.
D the great Drains.
E the like Cuts to each Farm.
F the like Cuts to the lesser Farms.
G the Cut from the south to the River.
H the Farm-houses and barns-halls of the great Farms.
I the lesser Farm Houses.
K the marks of division to the Farms.
L the mark of the ring hedge Ditch or wall.
M the four first great Farms.
N the 12 other great Farms.



This may serve as the plot of another great Manor of 2000 Acres wherein the four middle Tenements may be made into a great Farm, or 2 Lords' Demains. And then there remains twelve great Farms of 100 Acres apiece, and 12 lesser Farms of 25 Acres apiece, who inhabitants (being supplied labourers) lie conveniently to serve either the Lord or the great Farms. And which may be cast into either form Round or Square, though for my part I judge the round to be the best and most convenient.

This Chart is the Plot or Description of one entire Lordship, or Mannor-house, with its proper Demains : or it may serve for a considerable Farm of 100, 200, or 300 Acres.

- A* the Mannor house, or dwelling house.
- B* the Kitchin Garden.
- C* the Orchyard.
- D* the Garden for choyce fruits or flowers.
- E* the Garden for Physicall plants, or what you will.
- FF* the Dary and Landry.
- GG* the Sheep coats.
- HH* the two greatest of the home Closes to milk the Cows in, or to put a saddle Nag in.
- II* the Bake house and Brew house.
- K* the standing racks for Oxen, &c. and the great Corn Barn.
- LL* Other Barns, Stables, Cow or Ox-houses, Swines tyes.
- MM* the little houses for all sorts of Poultry.
- NN* More standing Racks.
- OO* Coney-berries.
- Q* little Closes for a stoned Horse, a Mare, or Fole, &c.
- RR* Little Closes for like purposes.
- S* two little Pastures for fat Sheep.
- T* two Closes for Pasture for Ewes, Lambs, or weaker Sheep.
- V* two little Pastures for a fat Beef or two.
- W* two little Pastures for infected Cattle.
- X* two little Pastures for your own, or your friends Saddle-horse, that is for present service.
- Y* two little Pastures for weaning Calves.



tendencies.⁶⁷ It cannot be discounted that a magical aspect lay below the surface of the English projections in Ireland. In 1584 we find Sir James Perrot, in seemingly numerological vein, proposing to build seven towns, seven bridges, and seven castles.⁶⁸ But John Dee, the Elizabethan scientist, mathematician, inventor and magus, may best illustrate this point. He was a man of many parts. He had inaugurated the Queen's coronation in 1558, setting the auspicious date of 15th January; he prepared the great chart of the North American coastline for Raleigh's enterprises there; and in 1577 he published *General and rare memorials pertayning to the Perfect Arte of Navigation*, one of "... a series of volumes which he planned should be an exposition of, and plea for, Elizabethan imperialism."⁶⁹ His preface to Billingsley's translation of Euclid (1570) has been described as the "... first articulation in England of ... 'Vitruvian Neoplatonism' which, he hoped, would reshape the arts on geometric principles to reflect the essential geometric structure of the Platonic worlds as evident in man himself."⁷⁰ The purpose of the work (and Dee affirmed Architecture as the master-discipline) was to present the numero-geometrical structure of the human form. Through contemplation of this, the human form being the microcosm and the image of God, the soul of the viewer would gain transcendence and be conveyed into the upper world of the Platonic Idea. For the Neoplatonist the circumscription of the ideal 'Vitruvian man' within circle and square⁷¹ accorded with the Platonic "... description of the regular forms of the macrocosm and their reflection in the small world of man ... Vitruvius thus provided apparent confirmation of the unity of antique theory on the microcosm - macrocosm analogy, and of the validity to the Neoplatonist of anthropomorphic qualities such as symmetry and proportion as proof of this analogy."⁷² Thus, according to Sir Henry Wotton, the highest achievement of the architect was in the revelation of the ideal, transcendent, Form - the revelation, as it were, of the 'truth' of the form, of which the phenomenal was a necessarily imperfect imitation.⁷³ Dee was himself to project an 'architectural' templum. He was involved in the practice of cabbalistic magic with his associate, Edward Kelley, a seer who related to Dee the voices and visions which presented themselves to him.⁷⁴ Believing them divine, Dee kept a detailed diary of his transactions with Kelley and the spirit world. On 20th June 1584 a spatial and

⁶⁷Vitruvius, Bk.I, Ch.II, 2 (p.22) and Bk.I, Ch.vi (p.24-31).

⁶⁸J.H. Andrews, p.185; Loeber, p.52-3.

⁶⁹Yates, 1993, p.48.

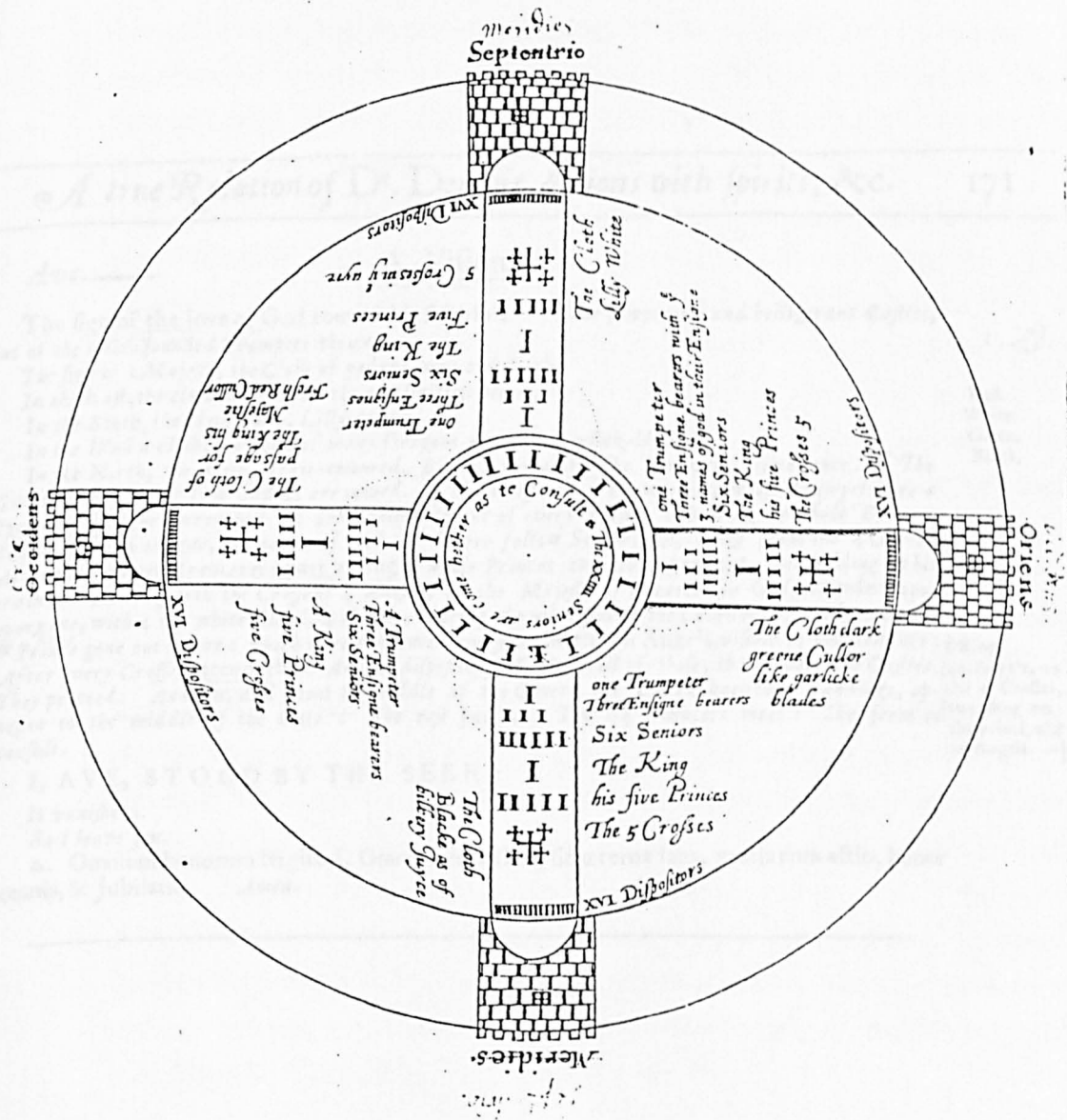
⁷⁰Hart, p.15.

⁷¹Vitruvius, Bk.III, Ch.i, 3 (p.73-73).

⁷²Hart, p.14-15.

⁷³"... to make the *Forme*, which is the nobler Part (as it were) triumph over the *Matter*"; cited in Hart, p.16.

⁷⁴Kelley was last heard of in Lancashire when his ears were lopped off as a punishment for the practice of necromancy.



Edward Kelley's vision, as related to John Dee. 20th June, 1584

Ave.

A Vision.

The sign of the love of God toward his faithful. *Four sumptuous and belligerant Castles,*
out of the which sounded Trumpets thrice.

The sign of Majesty, the Cloth of passage, was cast forth.

In the East, the cloth red; after the new smitten blood.

In the South, the cloth white, Lilly-colour.

In the West a cloth, the skins of many Dragons, green: garlick-bladed.

In the North, the cloth, Hair-coloured, Bilberry juice. ¶ The Trumpets sound once. ¶ The Gates open. ¶ The four Castles are moved. ¶ There issueth 4 Trumpeters, whose Trumpets are a

Pyramis, six cones, wreathed. ¶ There followeth out of every Castle 3, holding up their Banners displayed, with ensigne, the names of God. There follow Seniors six, alike from the 4 Gates:

After them cometh from every part a King: whose Princes are five, gardant, and holding up his train. Next issueth the Crosse of 4 Angles, of the Majesty of Creation in God attended upon

every one, with 4: a white Cloud, 4 Crosses, bearing the witness of the Covenant of God, with the Prince gone out before: which were confirmed, every one, with ten Angels, visible in countenance: ¶ King,

After every Crosse, attendeth 16 Angels, dispositors of the will of those, that govern the Castles. ¶ 40. Angels, on

They proceed: And, in, and about the middle of the Court, the Ensigns keep their standings, opposing to the middle of the Gate: The rest pause. The 24 Senators meet: They seem to attending on the principal 16 Angels. ¶

I, AVE, STOOD BY THE SEER:

It vanisheth.

So I leave you.

Δ. Omnium bonorum largitori, Omnipotenti Deo, sit æterna laus, gratiarum actio, honor omnis, & Jubilatio. Amen.

Red.
White.
Green.
Black.

numerologically-based vision was revealed played out on the architectonic structure of the templum.⁷⁵

Of seventeenth-century planned towns in Ireland, R.H. Buchanan has written: "Morphologically, many ... were distinguished by central squares or 'diamonds', formed by the crossing of the two main streets, and with a centrally located market house and church."⁷⁶ And we continue to detect the templum, this most persistent of ideal town forms. Philip Luckcombe, travelling in the south-west, reported: "Upon this stream, about a mile below Callan, is a very famous iron mill, that brings great profit to the proprietors. The town is built in the form of a cross; and in the centre a cross is erected, with a square glass lanthorn that gives light in the night to travellers that come from the four cardinal points of the compass."⁷⁷ Isaac Weld, traveller and stalwart of the Royal Dublin Society⁷⁸ wrote, in his Statistical Survey of County Roscommon, that: "Strokestown consists of two streets, one of them of immense breadth, which intersect each other, agreeing in their direction nearly with the cardinal points of the compass. The one running east and west, commences at Lord Hartland's demesne, the grand entrance to which forms a barrier quite across it at the lower or eastern end; thence it rises on a moderate slope, to the new church, situated at the extreme opposite end, on the highest ground in the town. This street is no less than forty-nine yards wide. The other, likewise on a slope, ascends from south to north, and though not equally broad, is nevertheless spacious, being twenty-one yards across; so that in reference to the *alignment*, few places can compare with Strokestown for the airiness and imposing effects of its streets."⁷⁹ Here the visual control is no less impressive than the planimetric and we are presented with a fine demonstration of geometry's ability to stage social authority (precisely to *impose*), to command the eye, and to expose the subject. But, to Weld's disapproval, an interstice was maintained within the geometric frame. On either of the main carriageway was a 'profitless' space that should have been privatized; its vacancy had become filled by woodworkers whose activities introduced "...confusion and disorder...", deforming the regulated frame.⁸⁰

For Lefebvre, the space produced by Rome was specifically the space of power. He suggests that what was an intuitive representation of space was transformed into a representational space of dual character- a privileged

⁷⁵folio leaf facing p.72; entitled "Wednesday, Junii 20 a Meridie. 1584. Cracovie. Dec, 1659

⁷⁶Buchanan, 1970, p.155.

⁷⁷Luckcombe, p.127.

⁷⁸Allibone, p.2636.

⁷⁹Weld, p.319.

⁸⁰ibid, p.320.

masculine principle, military, authoritarian, and juridical, and a repressed feminine, thrust down into the semi-unconscious 'mundus', the place of seed, sacrifice and death. Here we evidently move toward his conception of 'Abstract Space', a space everywhere marked by the violence of abstraction itself. He proposes that it has 3 formants: (i) the geometric formant of Euclidean space; (ii) the visual formant (the overwhelming of the body by the eye and the appearance of a space of intense and repressive visualization - note the accord of the visual and the geometric, their trajectories and the reduction of the real to flatness); and (iii) the phallic formant (force, political power, the means of constraint). While Euclidean space might seem to be limitless and transparent it is full of hierarchies, exclusions, and integrations; and behind the illusory transparency and rationality state power resides. As Lefebvre puts it "The space of a (social) order is hidden in the order of space."⁸¹ And with the claim to have divined the order of space the power of order, (the moral order / the order of the male), is naturalized.⁸²

⁸¹Lefebvre, p.289.

⁸²ibid, p.305.

d. *The grotesque and the monstrous*

What then do we erect in opposition to this? What would be the space of the clusters as thought in contradistinction? The *grotesque* perhaps, a term used by Thomas Pennant in 1772 when describing a summer pasturing village on the Scottish island of Jura.⁸³ We might characterize the grotesque as the breaking of the rule of form, the interruption of classical stasis, and the appearance of a certain fertility. In Vasari's words the Renaissance 'Grotesques' were "... paintings without rule."⁸⁴ Gombrich tells us that Renaissance authors encouraged painters to give their imagination free reign and to show their caprice and inventiveness in these works. And he comments that "The enigmatic configuration, the monsters and hybrids of the grotesque, are professedly the product of an irresponsible imagination on holiday."⁸⁵ Released from convention these paintings opposed strange convolutions, mixtures, morcellations, interconnections, and developments of corporeal with other imagery to the symbolic programme of the art which occupied the central position in the theory of decorum. It was precisely an art of deformations. In Mikhail Bakhtin's striking analysis of the grotesque body-image in the writings of Rabelais we can detect the convergence of a number of our themes. Firstly we note an opposition between grotesque and classical images of the body, while recalling the persistent analogy between the human form and the structure of the Roman town. The violation of the sacred boundary delimiting the latter was, according to Livy, "... like deforming the human body by stretching it too far."⁸⁶ With the classical body we find that all opportunities to separate it from others and from the world, to individualize it and close it off, to smooth its boundaries, are taken. For Bakhtin the rules of etiquette (eat without chewing loudly, do not snort or pant, keep one's mouth shut, etc) are part of the same regime.⁸⁷ In contrast, the grotesque body is everywhere marked by dualities ... it is in constant motion, never pure, always becoming another whether human, animal, vegetable, or mineral. Bakhtin writes: "The grotesque body ... is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body Thus the artistic logic of the grotesque image ignores the closed,

⁸³"Land on a bank covered with sheelins, the habitations of some peasants who attend the herds of milch cows. These formed a grotesque groupe; some were oblong, many conic, and so low that entrance is forbidden, without creeping through the little opening..." (Pennant, p.216).

⁸⁴Vasari, Milanesi I, p.193; cited in Gombrich, 1975, p.20.

⁸⁵Gombrich, 1975, p.20.

⁸⁶Sennett, p.108.

⁸⁷Bakhtin, p.315, 321, footnote 322.

smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths ... the grotesque imagery constructs what we might call a double body. In the endless chain of bodily life it retains the parts in which one link joins the other ...".⁸⁸ Its activity is directed against the authored, identity-giving, sacred boundary. The combinatorial movement of fleshy parts appears as a subversive mockery of the geometric, static, and authoritarian body; it undercuts the authority of form and order, an authority which deals out a fixed, static, and rightful place to everything. It is surely no coincidence that in Ben Jonson's *Irish Masque at Court*, performed before James I in 1613, the 'mastering' of the Irish is represented when they discard the body-deforming Irish mantle to reappear in English masquing apparel.⁸⁹ Bakhtin argues that it was within the European folk-tradition, within what he calls the "... extra-official life of the people"⁹⁰, that the grotesque endured. It was fundamentally related to the comic genre, being the well from which all mocking, disrespect, and uncrownings drew; the moment of the ribald shriek of laughter is the moment of the undoing of authority. The grotesque image opposes itself to all authority, whether that of the divine and cosmic, or the earthly authority of the king or general and his law. It is above all fertile, luxurious, and, in its renewal, uncontrollable. It becomes available with the appearance of a regulating ideal for form, and therefore is a possibility hidden within, and opened by, geometry itself; it is the jester to geometry's king. Thus its appearance within, and haunting, the geometric architectonic of Calvino's city of *Perinthia* is entirely appropriate. It arises in derision at the moment of geometry's inscription of the divine order and law on earth.

Calvino calls *Perinthia* a "city of monsters", and evidently when dealing with the grotesque we are close to the *monstrous*. Vitruvius, fulminating against 'Grotesques', wrote: "But these subjects which used to be copied directly from nature are now by a depraved taste disapproved, and monstrosities are painted on the plaster instead of the faithful forms of definite things."⁹¹ We have seen that Bakhtin described the grotesque body as marked through with dualities and it is within this ambivalence that we uncover the monstrous. The figure of the monster is heterogenous, both its nature and identity are impure. And in its impure identity it is against Nature itself, it affronts Nature.⁹² We have already noted the

⁸⁸ibid, p.317-318.

⁸⁹Jardine, p.68-69.

⁹⁰ibid, p.319.

⁹¹translation by Robert Bridges, in Bridges, p.20.

⁹²Such was Ruskin's "monstrification", signalled primarily by the unnatural (Ruskin, p.156). As we have seen, at the beginning of the *Topographia*, Gerald of Wales pictures a wilful Nature deviating from the true.

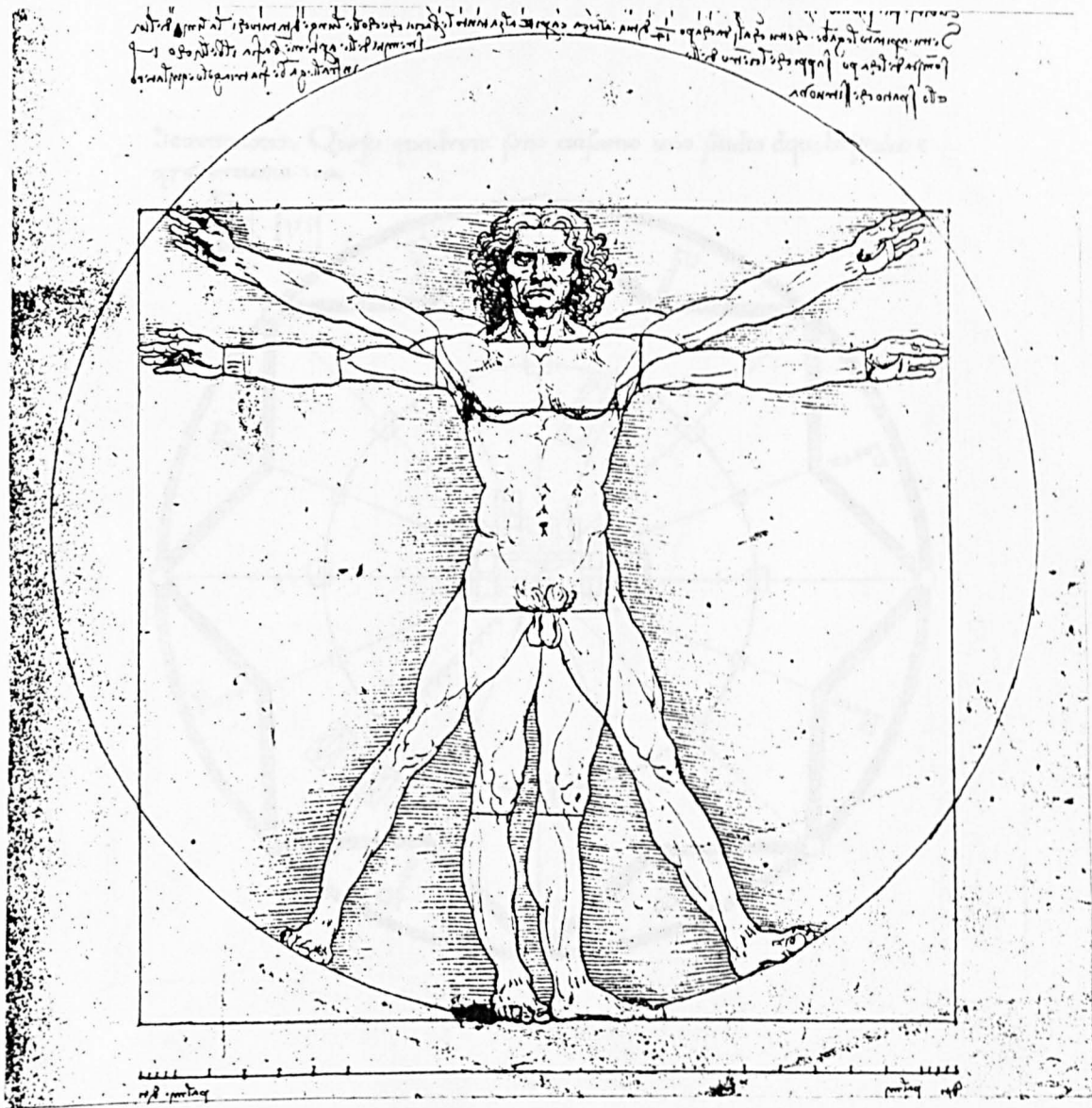
dualities put into operation in the discourse on Ireland. We now emphasize the claim of the abject categories (bestiality, disorder, irrationality, indolence, and the like) to indicate a dual nature; specifically they point to a human nature that is compromised by a sub-human strain. And this comes out strongly in the descriptions of 'clachans'; with, for example, the notion of the inhabitants "herding together." The recognition of the monstrous would assert itself most strongly when the notion of a static and architectonic, as opposed to an evolutionary, natural order was pre-eminent. The Chain of Being was such an architectonic arrangement. The idea of a dual nature of course has ancient claim on the Hellenized imagination; monstrous progeny from unnatural couplings proliferate. That of Queen Pasiphae, concealed in his geometrical cage, the disorder lurking within the heart of order, is only the most famous. The anthropological scale produced by Albertus Magnus in the 13th century in *De animalibus* included a link of "man-like creatures" between man and the animals.⁹³ Of the question of the savage within the Chain of Being, made urgent by European contact with the New World, Hodgen writes that "... it began to dawn upon some scholars that the troublesome problem might yet be solved; that the savage might be installed in the series not as a man as complete and finished as European man, but as a bridge or (missing) 'link' between finished man and the animals. It was suggested that he might conceivably be made, as human monster or as bestial man, the terminating member of the animal section of the hierarchy, or a dim, rude, brutal introduction to the human and intellectual series."⁹⁴ But it is with Sir William Petty's *Scale of Creatures* (1676-77) that Hodgen locates a decisive break in the idea of the unity of mankind, a rupture structuring Linnaeus' distinction, in 1735, between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo monstrosus*.

We have seen a complex of ideas emerge around the idea of 'geometry'; in what way do we relate it to the monstrous? Georges Bataille's short essay *The Deviations of Nature* begins with a quotation from the start of Pierre Boaistuau's 1561 book on monsters: "Among all things that can be contemplated under the concavity of the heavens, nothing is seen that arouses the human spirit more, that provokes more terror or admiration to a greater extent among creatures than the monsters, prodigies and abominations through which we see the works of nature inverted, mutilated, and truncated."⁹⁵ Bataille goes on to discuss experiments with composite photographs in which images of different faces were layered on top of one another resulting in a 'face' whose proportions matched nearly exactly the classical ideal of the Hermes of Praxiteles. He argues that Western thinking, taking its cues

⁹³Hodgen, p.417.

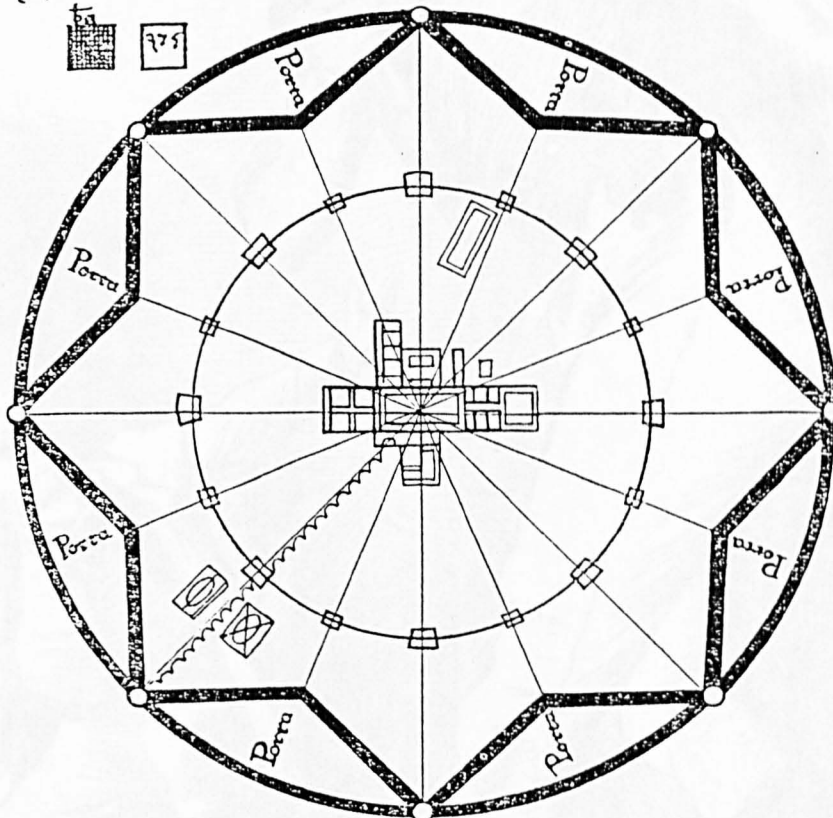
⁹⁴ibid, p.415.

⁹⁵Bataille, p.53.



Ideal Man: Leonardo's 'Vitruvian Man'

Dei quadrati. Questi quadrati sono ciascuno uno studio di quelle strade
 375 braccia 100.

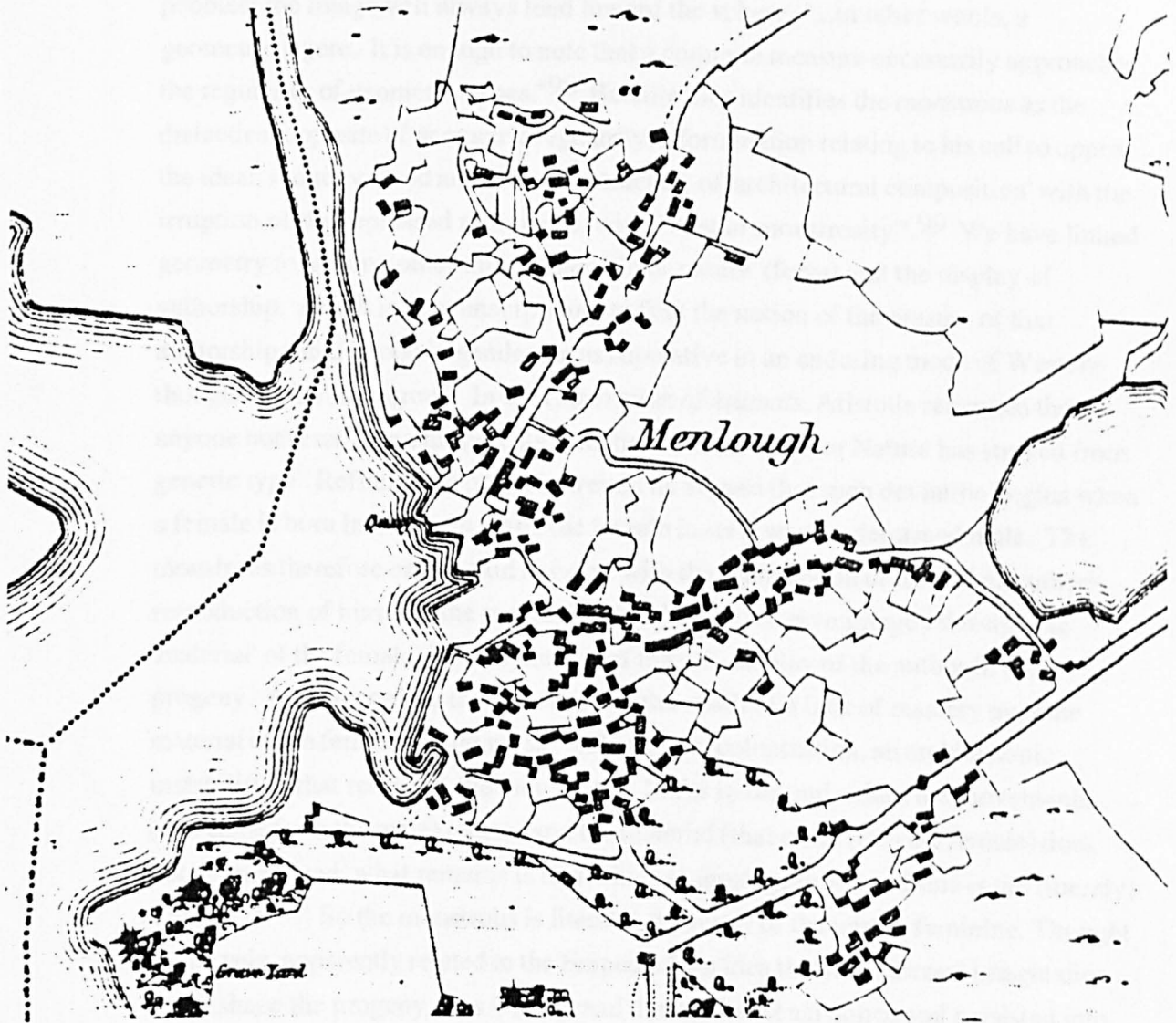


Ideal City: Filarete's 'Sforzinda'



THE IRISH FRANKENSTEIN.

“The baneful and blood-stained Monster . . . yet was it not my Master to the very extent that it was my Creature? . . . Had I not breathed into it my own spirit?” . . . (Extract from the Works of C. S. PARNELL, M.P.)



Irish 'City'

from the Hellenic tradition, erects this as the very 'idea of beauty' ("...the necessarily beautiful Platonic idea"⁹⁶), and his inference is that it is erected as the *natural* ideal. Beauty is thus "...at the mercy of a definition as classical as that of the common measure."⁹⁷ He goes on to show how the constitution of the perfect type through composite photography can be illustrated by layering images of irregularly-shaped pebbles; the image will always tend toward the sphere, "...in other words, a geometric figure. It is enough to note that a common measure necessarily approaches the regularity of geometric types."⁹⁸ Bataille thus identifies the monstrous as the dialectical opposite of geometric regularity, a formulation relating to his call to oppose the ideal, reductive, and authoritarian structure of 'architectural composition' with the irruption of the repressed monstrous, with "'bestial monstrosity'".⁹⁹ We have linked geometry to, among other things, the 'rule of nature' (form) and the display of authorship. And it is now unsurprising to find the notion of the erasure of that authorship (understood in gender terms) operative in an enduring mode of Western thought on the monstrous. In his *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle remarked that anyone not resembling his parents is really a monstrosity for Nature has strayed from generic type. Refining the point, however, he argued that such deviation begins when a female is born instead of a male; the female is, as it were, a deformed male. The monstrous therefore can be said to occur with the interruption of the father-author's reproduction of himself (the making of the child 'in his own image') through the 'material' of the female; it is the erasure of the self-display of the author in the progeny. And, according to Aristotle, it is the result of a lack of mastery over the material of the female (might we say a shortfall in colonization, an architectonic instability?) that results in the monstrous - "...for in the end, when the movements (that came from the male) relapse and the material (that came from the female) does not get mastered, what remains is that which is most 'general', and this is the (merely) 'animal'."¹⁰⁰ So the monstrous is literally the result of the unruly feminine. Thought in this vein, apparently related to the Empedoclean idea that the maternal imagination could shape the progeny, was widespread during the Renaissance and persisted into the early 19th century.¹⁰¹ It was believed that the monstrous resulted from the conjurings of the mother's imagination displacing the image of the father (the true form) from the figure of the child.

⁹⁶ibid, p.55.

⁹⁷ibid.

⁹⁸ibid.

⁹⁹Holier, p.ix-xii; Vidler, p.136-145.

¹⁰⁰Generation of Animals, Bk.IV, iii; cited in Huet, p.4.

¹⁰¹Huet, p.1,4.

An illustration from Regnault's *The Deviations of Nature* (1775), the 'Double Enfant', accompanies Bataille's essay and reminds us of Bakhtin's stress on the doubling of the grotesque body. This doubling leads onto a final point, revolving around the particular claim that the white savage had on the civilizing consciousness, namely the former's grotesque reproduction, in a sort of degenerate mimesis, of the geometric body. The white savage presented the agent of civilization with a problematic that the black savage never could for here was a monstrous inversion of the agent himself.¹⁰² It may be appropriate to see the white savage as an *uncanny* figure. In Freud's thought on this category he stressed the theme of "... a doubling, dividing, and interchanging of the self."¹⁰³ This is related to the theme of return and reoccurrence, of involuntarily and constantly rearriving at a point where one was before. Hence a feeling of entrapment and fatedness - a malevolence appears with the uncanny double, a threat to the ego. Freud's proposition was that the uncanny is that class of frightening things in which the frightening element is the reoccurrence of something that has been repressed.¹⁰⁴ What returns appears as a challenge to the self constructed through its very repression. Thus Freud's attention to Schelling's definition "'Unheimlich' is the name for everything that ought to have remained ... secret and hidden but has come to light." The question posed by the white savage was made available through his ambivalent location as both the same as and opposite to the agent of civilization. And so the project to reform and reconfigure becomes the imperative to escape the subverting shadow and to *return* the monstrous, which can only be seen as the undoing of all order and authority and hence is that which must be subdued, to its necessarily chthonic position. The theme of 'twinsip' received interesting treatment in the Punch cartoons of the second half of the 19th century. Hibernia, 'Cinderella sister' of Britannia, appears as, in Foster's words, "...a sort of platonic ideal which must be protected from Caliban...".¹⁰⁵ Here we have a recuperation of the idea of Ireland and an image which resonates with some of the Elizabethan commentaries. The spectral twin splits into the dual poles of purity and abjection. The monstrous

¹⁰²The white savage anticipated and pressed to an incomparably shrill level that condition of mimicry particular to colonialism. Mimicry is here used in the sense of a profound and penetrating ambivalence. On one hand the narcissistic urge of the colonist is to form the native into a representation of himself (and here escape the uncanny and regain civil stability), but on the other the colonist wants to retain a difference between himself and the native, across which power is exercised. Thus we have a reformed other, almost the same, yet pervaded by difference. Through the interplay of the two the reforming act is enduringly demonstrated, and the sovereignty of the colonist and his will is inscribed. And yet it is also questioned, for the reform is delimited, and that 'native excess' that lies beyond threatens it, even as it legitimizes and 'implores' colonial power. In these split 'identity-effects' of colonial culture, as Homi Bhabha has called them, the reformed other presents itself as a parodic presence, even as a deconstruction of the colonist. Mimicry turns to menace under the flux of narcissism and paranoia, and the civilizing structure of geometry is perpetually unravelled.

¹⁰³Freud, p.356.

¹⁰⁴ibid, p.363-4.

¹⁰⁵R.F. Foster, 1993, p.193.



TWO FORCES.

component (of Fenianism or the like), the very Muse of Misrule who bestially threatens the girlish Hibernia, is shown repressed by the intervention of Britannia.

This then is offered as a brief, and clearly conjectural, diagnosis of the interpretative grounding of the voices that described the 'clachans'. But we must remember that many voices were heard in 19th century Ireland, and those who dwelt at length on the characteristics of the clusters were liable to be those most offended or startled by them. And there is no doubting the essentialism (and corresponding impatience) of a figure such as T.C. Foster, on whose commentaries I have drawn at length. It was he, however, who was writing, reporting, and committing his views to print. My general argument, then, is that a dominant 'metaphysics of form' was in play in the interpretation of the clusters and lay behind the 'pragmatic', but obsessive, improvers' urge to correct, reform, straighten, square, and realign. The metaphysic of course drew on the naturalized inheritances of the Western tradition with its thematic of the transcendental ordering intelligence. In their formlessness and disorder, in their lack of a geometrical architectonic, in their beastliness and grotesqueness, what the clusters displayed was precisely a lack of mastery and authority. The regulating political transcendental, now standing before the divine, was not written into the space, and as such the clusters escaped form itself and thereby, at least as thought within this metaphysic, the space of domination. Their motion and lack of geometric stasis was profoundly subversive; the space was illegible, and did not speak of hierarchy and therefore order and control. That zone of centrality proper to authority, whether national authority as embodied in church or the authority of colonist, landlord or aristocrat, their instruments or agents, was missing. The space of the observer was excluded and there was no stage for the representation of social power. This, together with the obvious uniformity of means of the Irish peasantry, gave the clusters a recognized and pressing egalitarian quality. The drive of the improving landlords to consolidate land and break up the clusters did not result in some sort of new proto-urban nucleated settlements. Another geometrical type was generally the model (however compromised it came to be in practice) - the individual house sitting on rectangulated land. It was an ideal economic type which sought to break away from the scattered and inter-mixed holdings of the native Rundale system which was chastised for encouraging dispute and indolence, discouraging improvement of lands, impoverishing the tenantry, and spreading disease.¹⁰⁶ Tenant opposition was notable, however, on a number of fronts. In the early 1840's Lord George Hill found, while reorganizing land holdings on his Gweedore estate in County Donegal, that the peasants "...did not seem to have a taste for simple plain

¹⁰⁶see, for example, McCourt, 1950, p.98.

dealing, or that matters be put straight and made easy of apprehension."¹⁰⁷ Hill noted that "The pleasure the people feel in assembling and chatting together made them consider the removal of the houses from the clusters or hamlets in which they were generally built, to the separate farms, a great grievance..."¹⁰⁸ and Evans felt Hill's text showed that "...the greatest objection seems to have been taken to the house scattering. There were complaints about 'the solitary grandeur of the new dwellings'..."¹⁰⁹ Here geometry uncovers the individual in a strikingly similar way to Spenser's scheme for the geographic breaking up of the septs and the scattering of the individuals. To extricate a tenant from a space and a method of subsistence that was entwined with the other cluster dwellers, and to isolate person and land, was to erect the individual as a thorough-going economic subject onto whom the full onus for production, and responsibility for shortfall, swung. Synge's account of an eviction in an Aran Islands well illustrates the sheltering, defensive quality of the clusters, even if the inevitable could not be forestalled.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Hill, p.29.

¹⁰⁸ibid, p.30.

¹⁰⁹Evans, 1981, p.96-7.

¹¹⁰Synge, p.74-82.

Chapter 6. Conclusion and Introduction

It is the point of this work to open possibilities, and not to close them. Therefore the conclusion may be brief. The intention has been, by discussing the economy of the meanings within which the (anti-) form of the clusters has been suspended, to open up a position for reconsidering them. While it is too late for anthropology, the resources through which it would require to work having atrophied, architecture, with its existing 'investment' in the form, may yet gain something. Architectural practice proceeds with reference, unacknowledged or otherwise, to what it takes as being constitutive of its discipline at any time. None of its productions are ever simply 'new'; they emerge through a process of reference. The interest that the 'clachans' hold is their representation of all that the Western tradition of architecture, as the form-giving discipline *parexcellence*, disavows, and the hint they give us that different kinds of order (meant in the most expansive sense) lie within the structuring disorder defining the Western 'metaphysics of form'. By exposing the privileges and repressions constitutive of a discipline, the possibility of its reconfiguration becomes available. It is space of this kind - appearing as formless, savage, monstrous, grotesque, disordered, bestial (and feminine?) - that would lie opposed to the authoritarianism of form. What held my attention when beginning this work was the possibility of a truly architectural figuration in which identity emerged in architecture through a social and environmental negotiation rather than through domination. For such phenomena in the contemporary cultural condition one is constantly directed to the societal interstices, within which a reconfigured 'architectural' practice may develop.

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